PETER J. MOJUNTIN

THE GOLDEN SON OF THE KADAZAN

BERNARD STA MARIA

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by

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Bernard Sta Maria
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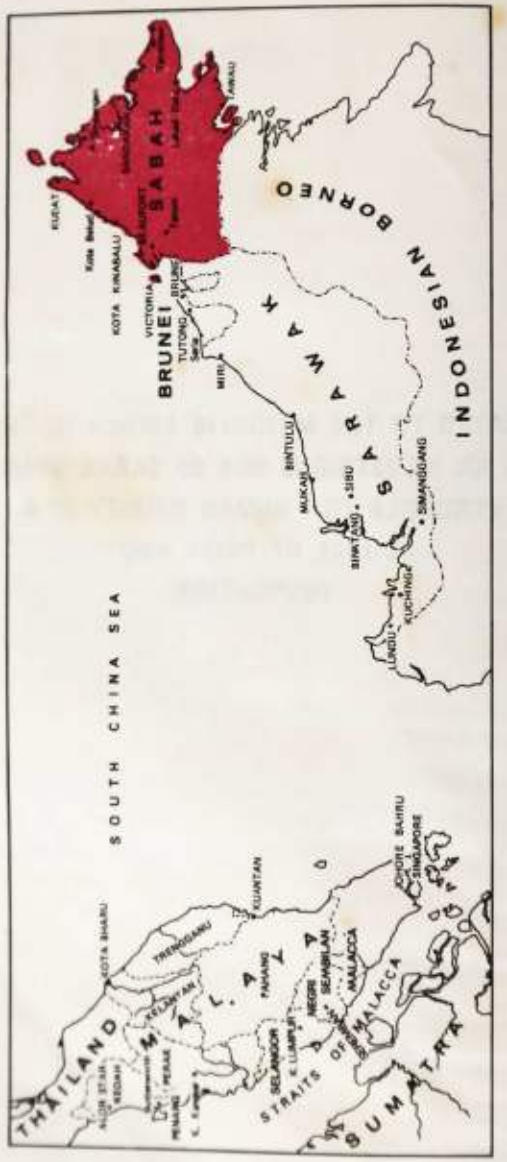
DEDICATED TO THE MOJUNTIN FAMILY IN TRIBUTE TO AN ILLUSTRIOUS SON OF SABAH WHOSE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN DIGNITY IS A SOURCE OF PRIDE AND INSPIRATION.



Peter J. Mojuntin

"No Person who has known YB Datuk Peter Mojuntin, even for five minutes, can fail to be impressed by the incredible courage and openess of character of the man. Here was a born leader of great promise, whose frankness, dynamism and eloquence has won the hearts of many who knew him. I shall never forget the historic meeting of August 11th last year, when YB Peter stood up to deliver one of the clearest and the most moving speeches ever heard in this House.

He instilled in all those who knew him an immediate sense of truth with the hallmark of a true champion. He fought for the rights of the Rakyat with the same selfless devotion to duty as his great mentor, YAB Tun Fuad. He shared not only the same capacity of love for his people, but also a charming sense of humour that put all around him at ease. Without question, he was a staunch and faithful friend, but he made a formiable foe.

As much as most men could have hoped for, he lived to the full. He always felt that there was much to learn, and much to live for. He possessed all the right qualities of leadership and was growing in stature everyday. Alas, here was another flower of Sabah's younger generation that has not been given time to bloom.

YB Datuk Peter will always be remembered as the man who not only served his constituency well, but served his state and country more."

YAB Datuk Harris Salleh
Chief Minister
Sabah.
June 14, 1976.

Preface

"The Golden Son of the Kadazan " is a biography of Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin. It traces the period before Sabah (British North Borneo) attained its Independence through Malaysia, on 16th September 1963, to the era that witnessed the rise and fall of political forces, culminating in Peter's tragic death on board the Nomad Aircraft on 6th June 1976. Peter was then only 37 years old.

Wherever possible attempts have been made to include relevant topics of public interest that occured during his life. The formation of Political Parties in Sabah preceeding Independence; the State and Federal Elections during the post-independence period; the tragic eviction of Singapore from Malaysia on 9th August 1963; the unconstitutional removal of Dato Stephen Kalong Ningkan as Chief Minister of Sarawak in September 1966; the manoeuvres and manipulations engineered to destroy a tyrannical and corrupt regime and the restoration of democracy with the ascendancy of Party Berjaya.

In writing 'The Golden Son of the Kadazan' I have tried to project the cultural heritage of that unique community. The origin of the Kadazan race is still obscure although it has been narrowed down to two possible theories. One School of Thought is of the opinion that the Kadazan are descendants of very early Chinese settlers, dating back to perhaps several thousand years. The other theorises the concept that the Kadazan are homogenous to the Borneo Islands.

In this book I have also tried to give a kaliedoseopic view of the Harvest Festival and the socio-economic aspects of the Kadazan Community.

I am greatly indebted to Y.B. Conrad Mojuntin, the Assemblyman for Moyog, who rendered unlimited coperation and to Datin Nancy Mojuntin, whose candid and frank comments were essential ingredients in the production of this book.

A word of thanks to Mr. C.J. Thomas whose initial background information acted as a valuable source of information, and Mr. Michael Bong of Sarawak whose early encouragement provided the incentive for the compilation of this book. Undoubtedly, there are many more whose names I have not mentioned but whose services were indispensible in the production of this biography and to all those, I wish to express my profound appreciation.

In writing this book I have relied primarily on the correspondence of Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin, on newspaper accounts and on personal interviews. Where facts and details are found to be wanting, I apologise because of the acute pressure of time in discharging my responsibilities as an elected Member of the Malacca State Legislative Assembly and the separation of 1200 miles from the scene of activity.

B.S.M.

Malacca,
23 April, 1978.

The Tragedy Of 666

The meteorological station in Sabah predicted fair weather. From all indications, it was the beginning of another exciting day. For the majority, it was the realisation of a long cherished dream which only a few months ago was unattainable. There was much to rejoice for a new spirit had descended, sweeping away the fears and apprehensions. Everywhere there were celebrations to mark the occasion. It was the dawn of a new era – The Berjaya Era.

Such was also the mood on that fateful day, June 6th, 1976. Berjaya's reign was still in its infancy, its leaders busy, yet tranquil and jubilant, skirting all over the State, adding glamour to the never ending celebrations. The impossible had become a reality. USNO had been out manoeuvred, trapped and defeated. The trials and tribulations meted out from eleven years of USNO's rule had ended.

Datin Nancy Mary Mojuntin was relaxing at her home sipping a cup of tea, in conversation with a friend from Kuala Lumpur. She was resting after weeks of hectic campaigning while Datuk Peter, the founder of Berjaya and architect of its victory, was fulfilling his political obligations.

He travelled the length and breadth of Sabah, participating in the various victory celebrations. His long cherished dream, one for which he was prepared to sacrifice his life, had finally been fulfilled. He had successfully engineered the end of tyrannical rule in Sabah.

While Nancy was engrossed in the conversion, the children were busy playing at the badminton court. Donald who was 12 and Charles only 9 were halfway through a match when her father, Lidwin Mobijohn, dashed hurriedly to the house. Ignoring his daugher, he walked briskly to the rear of the house, endeavouring his utmost to avoid Nancy. It was not until he arrived at the kitchen that his voice became audible. Nancy heard him say, "Get the land-rover. Hurry !"

George Mojuntin, the eldest in the Mojuntin family, was preoccupied with his favourite hobby. He and his friends were playing golf at the Kota Kinabalu Golf Club. The sound of an air-plane circling a short distance from the green, interrupted his concentration. He thought it was the daily *Malaysian Airline System (MAS) 737* in-bound flight from Manila but then he wondered. He had a sudden premonition. Was the plane in distress ? He looked up at the plane, not realising neither believing that soon he would be a witness to the most catastrophic mishap in the Nation's history.

While gazing at the plane, above the Sembulan Sea, he saw to his consternation, a tragedy about to be enacted. A ten-seater Nomad Aircraft, approximately 600 feet above, approaching the runway from the North, seemed to stall then suddenly spiralled downwards into the shallow sea. Others that were in the vicinity were similarly hypnotised by the drama unfolding before them. Everyone was praying

and hoping the inevitable would not occur. The plane must not crash for none would survive if it did. There was an eerie silence.

For a brief moment nobody moved. Never had they seen such a spectacle nor heard a louder impact. The Nomad Aircraft, a property of Sabah Air, had crashed. It had struck hard in water barely three feet deep. Parts of it were embedded in the sea, as if sculptured by a master craftsman. Everyone knew there would be no survivors, but none knew who were inside except those at the Control Tower a short distance away.

The Airport was swamped with telephone calls, everyone urgently seeking to know the identity of the passengers and the cause of the crash. One of those urgent calls came from the Golf Club. The news spread like wild fire. Some Berjaya Leaders were involved in the plane crash. No names were revealed for none knew who they were, perhaps not even those at the Control Tower, or did they ?

George Mojuntin was similary informed by a friend at the Golf Club that a few Berjaya Leaders were in the plane that had crashed a few minutes ago. What thoughts must have gone through his mind in those fleeting moments ! Who were on board ? Was Peter one of the victims ? He dared not hope; he could only pray that his brother was not on that plane. Composing himself and wasting no time, he rushed to see his younger brother Conrad Mojuntin to tell him of the mishap without revealing the identity of the victims.

Conrad was halfway through his physical exercises, sweating profusely from the weights that he had just been lifting. He enquired nervously whether Peter was on the plane. George remained silent. Conrad was aghast; he could

not believe; he refused to believe. It could not happen to Peter, not when he had just risen to the pinnacle of fame and power. Furthermore, Peter was too young; he was only 37.

Picking up his shirt he dashed off to the mortuary, while George grief-stricken left Conrad to break the sad tidings to Nancy.

Those who were in the vicinity of the accident rushed to the scene. The plane was a total wreck. The Sembulan Sea was dyed crimson. Blood was oozing from the broken tissues of the deceased. The plane had crashed less than 50 feet from the stilt houses of Kampong Sembulan Baru. The time was approximately 3.41 p.m. Among those that first arrived at the scene of the accident were relatives and comrades of the Berjaya leaders. One of them was a nephew of Tun Fuad Stephens. He described the scene as 'grotesque'. He had come to establish the identity of the Berjaya leaders.

All the while, he kept hoping that his uncle had taken another plane. It was not until he saw, floating out of the wreckage, the familar white shoes of Tun Fuad, that he despaired. If the cigar is synonymous with Churchill, then the white shoe was synonymous with Tun Fuad. And to confirm his suspicion, there floated out of the plane, the mutilated body of Tun Fuad's faithful bodyguard, Corporal Said, who was among the the first victims to be identified. There was no more speculation. Tun Fuad Stephens, Sabah's Chief Minister for 53 days, was a victim of the crash. But who else ?

The impact of the crash had caused the bodies to converge near the cockpit, except for one who was found still strapped to his safety belt. The impact was devastating. As the deceased were dragged out of the wreckage, it was noticed that a few had lost their limbs, and their faces scarred beyond recognition except for Peter whose facial

characteristics remained intact. There was one whose severed head was found a distance from the body. Tun Fuad being the most stout was easily identified. As for the rest, identification posed more problems.

At the cockpit, buried in the ground, was the pilot Captain Nathan and Tun Fuad's son Johari Stephens who sat in the co-pilot's seat. He was a trainee pilot. It took a great deal of effort to extricate them from the plane. One eye witness describing the incident said, "their bodies turned jelly with practically every bone in their bodies broken or smashed."

At the final count, there were eleven dead: Tun Fuad Stephens, Chief Minister,Datuk Peter Mojuntin – Minister of Local Government and Housing,Datuk Salleh Sulong– Minister; Mr. Chong Thian Voon – Minister; Mr. Darius Binion – Assistant Minister, Dr. Syed Hussin Wafa – Director of State Economic Planning Unit,Datuk Ishak Atan– Private Secretary to Federal Finance Minister; Mr. Johari Stephens, Captain Ghandi Nathan and Corporal Said.

The bodies were rushed to the hospital where the next of kin were anxiously waiting. They hoped that the doctors at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would at least stitch up the severed parts of the body. For more than six hours the doctors worked on the mutilated bodies to fix hands, heads and ribs. While this was in progress, Datin Nancy and two associates were speeding to the scene of the accident. She was still unaware of her husband's demise. But there were sufficient indications to convince her that something was amiss especially when her father had remarked that some Berjaya Ministers had met with an accident.

She could not believe that her husband was involved in the accident. Peter had gone to Labuan the day before to declare open a Berjaya Branch and to participate in its

victory celebrations. What was he doing at this hour when he should have returned at 1.30 p.m. ? He had with him a MAS return ticket for a flight to Kota Kinabalu. But she had to find out. Whilst speeding past the hospital, she noticed a large crowd had gathered and others were coming there from all directions. Out of curiosity she stopped and was in the process of alighting from the car, when a doctor approached her and asked, "So you have heard ?"

She followed the doctor to the mortuary but could not believe what she saw. There lying before her, was her husband; only 37 years old and father of her five children. He was dead. She dropped to her knees and wept, and begged before her deceased husband, to forgive her for all the wrongs that she had committed against him. Standing beside her was her brother-in-law Conrad, still unable to believe that Peter was dead. The vibrant, energetic idol of the Kadazans, could not die, at least not now, when all of Sabah needed him. He was the herald of a new order.

He did not have long to wait. At 6.00 p.m. the Deputy Chief Minister, Datuk Harris Salleh, in a voice choked with emotion, broke the news to the stunned nation. Glued to the television sets and ears straining to the radio, the whole of Sabah listened attentively to Datuk Harris Salleh. He said, "Tun Fuad and his Party were returning to Kota Kinabalu from Labuan when the Sabah Air Nomad Aircraft, coming in to land at the airport, spun and crashed. The aircraft broke into several pieces. The cause of the accident is not yet known".

Where there was joy, sadness had replaced it; where there was success, doubts began to creep in. The revelling was over. Sorrow and uncertainty filled the air. The tragedy created a vacuum in Berjaya's leadership. What was to happen to Berjaya now ? This was the immediate reaction of

Toh Puan Rahimah Stephens, the wife of Tun Fuad, when informed of the accident by the Deputy Chief Minister.

"What is going to happen to Berjaya now" ? The stoical Harris Salleh could not control his emotions when the question was posed to him. Toh Puan Rahimah was not concerned of her family problems; the future of Berjaya took precedence ! Everywhere the same feeling prevailed. Would USNO capitalise on this sudden loss of Berjaya's elite, and stage a comeback at the impending by-elections ? Five seats were at stake. Would all their efforts, the sacrifices and millions of dollars that were harnessed to end repression, end after 53 days ?

In Peninsular Malaysia, the tragic news was broadcast by Radio Malaysia. It was received with shock and dismay. None could comprehend how so many Ministers could have died together. As the names of the Ministers were released, the public gasped. When I heard the broadcast, I telephoned a few political leaders, to find out if they knew of the tragedy. Among those I contacted was the Leader of the Opposition in the Federal Parliament, Mr. Lim Kit Siang, Member of Parliament for Kota Melaka. He could only manage to exclaim, "My God! My God! Oh No!" as the names of the illustrious sons of Sabah were mentioned to him.

The Prime Minister, Datuk Hussein Onn, received a telephone message from the Sabah Deputy Chief Minister, Datuk Harris Salleh. He immediately ordered a full scale investigation into the cause of the crash. The special investigation team was to comprise officers from the Civil Aviation Department, the Roval Malaysian Air Force, the Royal Malaysian Police and other associated departments.

What was the cause ? What had actually happened ? Speculations ran wild. The public were hungry for news.

All the national dailies highlighted the incident. Even in Singapore, the *New Nation's* front page splashed, "FUAD: SABOTAGE SUSPECTED". Throughout the region the majority came to that conclusion. The Australian manufacturers of the Nomad Aircraft were quick to act. They had to prove that the crash was not caused by a mechanical defect. They had to act quickly or there would be a drop in sales and the agony of litigation. If there were no mechanical defects, then what else could be the cause, except sabotage ? State and National Leaders worked hard and frantically to counter the growing suspicion. A grave situation had developed and had to be handled cautiously. Meanwhile the bodies of the deceased were escorted to their respective homes.

At approximately 10.00 p.m., a few hours after his death, Datuk Peter's body was brought to his house in Kampung Hungab, Penampang. A large crowd had assembled at his home; some had waited for several hours. They all wept openly as his body was carried in. His death was a personal lose to everyone. The people never stopped coming.

Crest-fallen and in tears, they kept arriving until the next morning. Datuk Peter's body was then escorted to the Community Centre at Kota Kinabalu, for the public to pay their last respects. The bodies of the other State dignitaries were similarly brought to the Community Centre. Thousands filed past in silent tribute and a last tearful farewell.

Datuk Peter's body was taken from the Community Centre to St. Michael's Church, Penampang, for the last rites. His flag draped coffin, befitting his status as a State Minister, was carried by a guard of honour. On its arrival at approximately 2.45 p.m. it was ceremoniously received at the entrance of the Church, blessed, and carried into the Church. A Requien High Mass followed. There were nine

priests in attendance. Rev. Fr. T. Chi, the Vicar Delegate, representing Bishop Simon Fung, conducted the service.

The church was packed. Several hours before the service could begin, thousands were seen streaming into the Church compound, some climbing up the hill to be present at the funeral service. They came to have a last glimpse of the golden son of the Kadazan, whose unflinching faith and indomitable courage helped change the course of Sabah's history.

It was an unusually lenghty Requiem Mass. In his eulogy, the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Preyde paid a glowing tribute to Datuk Peter. The hymn "Oh! Paradise" was sung and the Kadazan mourning hymn was also sung. It was a moving scene which left many eyes wet and swollen. The silence and the solemnity magnified the already intense grief.

After the Requiem Mass, the coffin was opened for all to have their final view of Datuk Peter, a friend who was close to their hearts.

More than 3,000 people filed past the coffin. Many could not control their emotions. Some were heard calling his name; others cried openly. It is in moments like this that we are able to see the great esteem in which a leader is held. It was the saddest funeral ever in Penampang. When the final blessings were over, the coffin of Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin was slowly lowered into the grave. The sun had set on the golden son of the Kadazan.

The Church that had been the butt of countless ridicules and oppression, began to feel the vaccum most. While some had swayed like weeds in the wind and surrendered the faith meekly, and others remained neutral in order to appease the establishment, Peter Mojuntin, a convert at 15, had remained steadfast in his belief, became a champion of his faith and

stemmed the tide of persecution. His death was a great loss. The fear of persecution now loomed on the horizon. Would the Church again experience the nightmare of USNO's rule ? Prayers and masses were offered in all Christian Churches for capabale men in Berjaya to fill the vacancies. Without Peter, the Church had no chance of survival under another USNO government.

Peter was often hailed by his admirers and foes, *'The Golden Son of the Kadazan'*. His people loved and idolised him. He gave them unity of purpose and strength, and they stood firmly behind him. Above all he gave his people pride and self-respect.

He worked zealously for his people and sacrificed his life for them. His untimely death was felt instantly and is still being felt by the Kadazan. Will there ever be another Kadazan boy, with such energy and drive, prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice while sitting on the other side of the House ? For the test of a true leader is not during moments of triumph but more so during periods of stress and strain.

While the high-powered investigating team probed the causes of the catastrophe, several newspapers carried out their own investigations. *The Borneo Bulletin* of June 12th, 1976 had this to say: "As the 11 people who were to travel in Tun Fuad's plane filed aboard, Tun Fuad's son, Johari, asked if he could ride in the co-pilot's seat. This was agreed too. Johari, 25, was a trainee pilot with the Sabah Flying Club. The plane took off.

From Labuan to Kota Kinabalu by Nomad takes only about 40 minutes. Shortly after 3.30 p.m. Tun Fuad's plane should have been coming straight in for a landing. The weather was good and VIP aircraft was normally given immediate clearance.

But the plane circled and approached the airport from the North. There were reports, later denied, about conflicting instructions from ground control. "The whole thing was extremely unusual," an airport offical said the next day.

The Nomad did not carry a black box to record all its changes of course and altitude, as larger aircraft do, but the answer presumably will be had eventually from control tower tapes of conversation between ground control and the pilot.

About 3.40 p.m. the aircraft was about 600 feet up, flying at 86 knots, approaching the runway from the north, when something went wrong. People below said later that it "seemed to stall", that one wing dipped down and that the plane spiralled down.

More precisely, it completed one and a half turns on the way down. There is some indication the pilot tried to recover but he had no chance.

It struck hard in water about 50 feet from the nearest houses in Kampong Sembulan, only five minutes drive from the centre of Kota Kinabalu. Had it hit the crowded kampong, the disaster would have been even greater. There was a loud noise and, according to one witness, 'the ground shook'.

The time, permanently recorded by a clock which stopped at the moment of impact, was 27 seconds past 3.41 p.m.

The people from Kampong Sembulan waded out through the shallow sea water towards the wrecked aircraft but did not go close. "We were too scared to go near in case it exploded," one said.

Firemen from a near by station were quickly on the scene, and then policemen and the area was cordoned off. Firemen used axes to cut open the plane, and the 11 bodies were removed, badly mutilated, but still recognisable, to the mortuary at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Two revolvers, five watches and 6,000 in cash were recovered.

The twin-engine Nomad normally has a pilot and a co-pilot but on this flight the only qualified person on board was Captain Nathan.

Capt. S. A. Wahab, the Acting Managing Director of Sabah Air, later said that "it was a bit difficult to comment on this.'

"The inquiry would take weeks to complete. Until the board releases its findings, I am not in a position to comment," he added.

The *Far Eastern Economic Review* of June 18th 1976, reported: "The Nomad aircraft went down in shallow water less than 100 yards from the houses on stilts which comprise the Kampong of Sembulan Baru. Private Aircraft fly over this point at 200 or 300 feet as they approach the north eastern end of the runway. Some who claimed to be eyewitnesses say the Nomad was veering from side to side before it fell into its fatal spiral."

"It is claimed that the aircraft was making its second approach having aborted the first due to another aircraft preparing to take off. All wreckage from the crash was quickly removed to the airport by the military for close examination by the experts."

The official enquiry went on. They had to know whether it was a mechancial fault or human error. Why was the VIP plane not given precedence over an in-bound MAS

737 flight ? Why did ground control instruct Captain Nathan to make a second approach at landing? Was it because precedence was given to scheduled flights ? But then, have exceptions never been made ? Does not a party of VIP's warrant an exception, especially with the Chief Minister on board ? Or is the speculation true that the aircraft was sabotaged ?

Investigations later revealed that Datuk Peter, Tun Fuad and other Berjaya leaders had gone to Labuan to receive the Malaysian Federal Minister of Finance, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and the Sarawak Chief Minister. Datuk Patinggi Hj. Abdul Rahman Yacob. Tun Fuad and the other Ministers flew back to Kota Kinabalu to participate in a walkathon organised by the Federal Department staff for the National Monument Restoration Fund while Datuk Peter stayed back at Labuan. He was to return home by the 1.30 p.m. MAS flight.

After the walkathon of 6th June 1976, the party returned to Labuan as Tun Fuad had an appointment with the Federal Finance Minister regarding the signing of an agreement with Petronas. Petronas, the Government agency administering the Malaysian Petroleum Industry, had to conclude an Agreement with the Sabah Government as expeditiously as possible since the former Chief Minister had not signed the agreement.

At approximately 3.00 p.m. Tun Fuad and his party unanimously decided to fly back to Kota Kinabalu as they were still in high spirits, the aftermath of victory. Datuk Peter who had earlier cancelled his MAS ticket decided to travel with the Tun's party. He also declined an invitation to travel in another plane that was leaving with Datuk Harris and Datuk Patinggi. The ten-seater Nomad aircraft carried eleven persons and an assortment of heavy goods from the

duty-free port of Labuan. Expensive golf equipment and colour television sets were among those recovered from the wreckage. Before the plane could take off one of the eleven was heard to remark, "We are like all the eggs in one basket." What a prophetic remark ! Probably that was why they all died together.

Tributes and messages of condolence poured into Sabah. In an article, probably meant as an obituary for Datuk Peter, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* acknowleged: "Mojuntin, particularly, had tried in vain to keep the flag of the oppositon flying after Stephens dissolved his early party, the United People's Kadazan Organisation, in the wake of 1967 state elections, thereby making Sabah a one party state. In trying, Mojuntin earned an anti-Kuala Lumpur reputation, not surprising since in the late 1960's and early 1970's , it was Kuala Lumpur's one-sided support for Tun Mustapha which helped make him so powerful, along with Stepehns. Tun Fuad lived this reputation down ; Mojuntin never quite did. For all that, he remained probably the most able state politican outside the rank of Chief Ministers in Malaysia's 13 state Federation."

"His death, along with Stephens' will be felt acutely by the Kadazan community, Sabah's largest, and immediately it is not obvious who will eventually obtain the ascendancy they had enjoyed, well illustrated by the fact that Mojuntin secured the largest majority in the recent state elections."

The Catholic Sabah commented: "The greatest blow for the Sabah Catholics in the past year was the sudden death of Datuk Peter Mojuntin. He had been the "ROCK" in difficult times: true to his faith, true to his people. He was a man of principle and integrity, always with the interest of the people at heart. In him we lost a leader of rich

experience, deep wisdom, great vision and tremendous push. He had no ambitions for himself: he was a man of faith who generously responded to the call of the people to be their leader and spokesman. He found power in his prayer, he found courage in his faith. Let us pray that many leaders will follow his footstep."

The Borneo Bulletin reported: "Datuk Peter Mojuntin, the Minister of Local Government and Housing, and a forceful member of the Kadazan, would have in time been acclaimed *Huguan Siou* (Great Leader) by his 200,000 strong community – a mantle worn with grace by Tun Fuad."

On 28th October 1976, four and a half months after the tragedy, the official probe was over. Those who were anxiously waiting to hear some shattering news, revealing evidence of sabotage or technical blunders, were disappointed. The findings were not made public except for the statement by the Deputy Communications Minister, Enche Mohd. Ali bin M. Sharif.

Enche Mohamad Ali was replying to a question posed by the D.A.P. MP for Kinta, Enche Ngan Siong Hin, who had asked the Federal Government during the Parliamentary session on the 28th October 1976, whether the government intended to reveal the findings regarding the crash of the Nomad Aircraft in Sabah on 6th June 1976 ?

In his reply, the Deputy Communications Minister said: "The findings of an investigating team did not reveal any technical errors or sabotage as being the causes of the air crash. What they have instead discovered is that the fault was due to 'human error'.

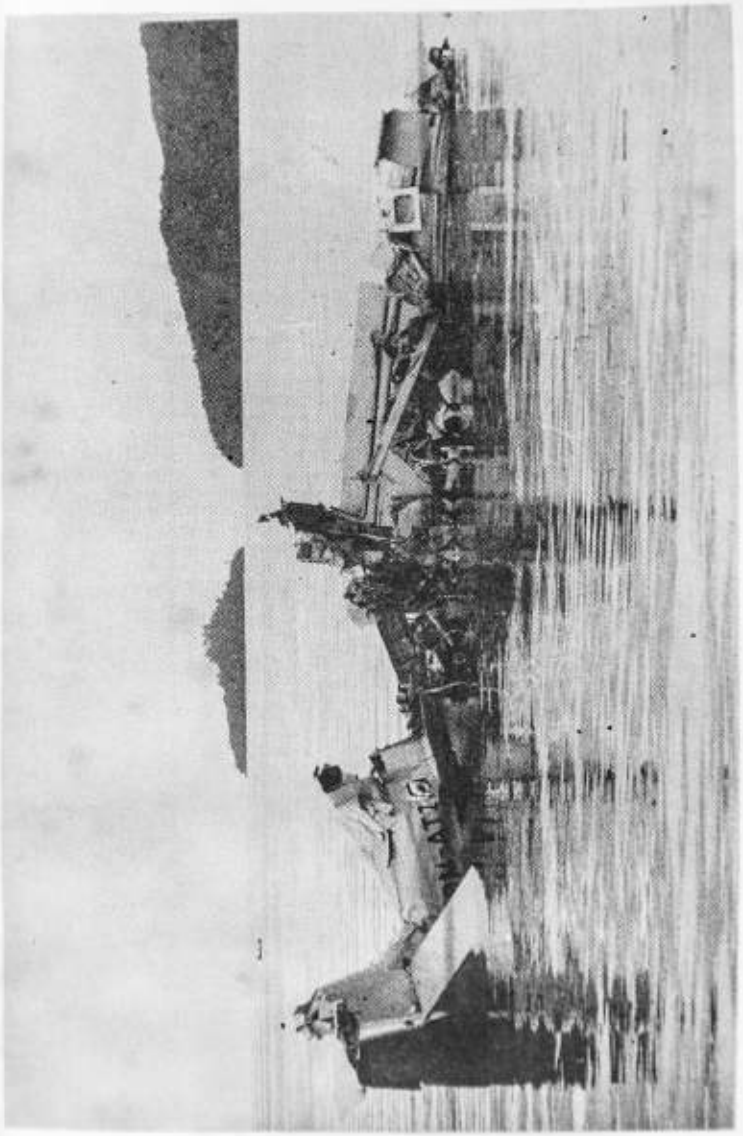
"It also revealed that the plane's storage space at the back of the plane, was loaded with goods above the maximum load. As a consequence this had resulted in the plane

losing control, each time it attempted to land at the Kota Kinabalu Airport, thus resulting in the accident."
(Translation from Bahasa Malaysia.)

Is this the end of the story ? Was the cause solely due to 'human error'? Would an experienced and capabale pilot, whose efficiency was well known, disregard the excess weight ? Would eleven individuals, who were responsible personabilities, flirt with death ? Or were they all too drunk with excitement to see fantasy for reality ?

Many questions have been left unanswered. Making public the Report of the official investigating team will help clear the air of suspicion that continues to linger in the minds of many. A two or three paragraph statement is grossly insufficient. Until a more comprehensive report is documented and released, the public is entitled to harbour doubts and misgivings. There is no compromise, for too many important people had died. Only a thorough, complete and honest report can vindicate the investigation.

Dissatisfaction raises questions and questions call for investigations. We are probably at the beginning and not the end of an investigation.



The crash that killed Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin on 6th June, 1976.

Widowed
Datin Nancy Mojuntin (seated)
Standing R – L . Donald, Charles, Ester, Peter Jr., Deidre.

The Golden Son Of The Kadazan

The Kadazan Community, is perhaps the largest and oldest in the state of Sabah. According to one theory, the Kadazan are descendants of the early Chinese settlers. Professor K. G. Tregonning* described them as being proud of their Chinese heritage for they 'still wear the queue' and many Chinese customs and usages are part of their culture.

Another school of thought is of the opinion that the Kadazan originated from the Philippines or around the Borneo Islands. F.G. Whelan called them the "mild men of Borneo since they all are honest and peace loving". They are also known to retaliate vehemently if their rights are threatened, and this can be verified from several case histories. At the 1891 uprising, the Kadazan warned the British authorities that they would resist to the maximum if their livelihood were threatened. Similarly, in the 1911 Land Tenure case, the British Government was taken to court where although the Kadazan lost the case after a month long hearing, they were satisfied because the proceedings gave ample proof that native rights were well protected.

The Kadazan and the Muruts are the oldest settlers of Sabah. The Kadazan are by far the overwhelming

*K.G. Tregonning: Under Chartered Company Rule (Malaya 1958) pp. 32

majority. They are predominantly found in the districts of Penampang, Keningau, Tuaran, Ranau, Tambunan, Kudat, Kuala Penyu and parts of the East Coat. It is estimated that there are approximately 200,000 Kadazan throughout the State.

Those who know the Kadazan have been amazed by their simplicity and honesty. They are extremely hospitable to visitors and take pride in the knowledge that no stranger would starve in a Kadazan *kampong*.

The name *'Dusun'* was once used for all these people but it is a name which was given to them by other people for the purpose of convenient reference since all of them live in the villages and interior of Sabah. The name Dusun is not indigenous. Not long ago leaders of these people, including their Native Chiefs decided the name Dusun should not be used and that the race should be called Kadazan.

The Kadazan preferred not to use the name Dusun because the word 'Dusun' according to *Kamus Dewan* (the official Malay dictionary) means 'an obscure village or an orchard!' They believe, as F. G. Whelan* claimed, that they were being labelled as 'stupid country men!' No Kadazan or any one else would like to be associated with such references.

It was into this community that Simon Peter Joinod Mojuntin was born on October 10th, 1939 in the village of Hungab, in the Penampang District. On this day was born to the Kadazan community a boy who would grow up and transform a fragmented community into one resourceful entity, dynamic in its action and united in its purpose. His father, Mojuntin Matanul like his ancestor, has long resided in this village, which is approximately six miles from the State Capital, Kota Kinabalu. They have descended from a family of farmers. Peter's grandfather, Matanul,

* F.G. Whelan: The Story of Sabah (Malaysia 1969) pp. 4.

had owned six acres of padi land, two acres of rubber and an acre of sago. This piece of property has been the only property of the Mojuntin family. Peter's parents have now inherited it.

Kampong Hungab is one of the major kampongs in the Penampang district with a population of five hundred. It is surrounded by padi fields, lush sago, swamps, coconut plantations and some orchards. It is believed to have originated from a small padi area but the exact date of its origin is obscure since its history was never recorded.

According to the oldest surviving resident of that kampong, the name Kg. Hungab was derived from the Kadazan word *Nohungaban*. This was the word used to describe the costume worn by the men during the earlier days. It is said that they wore very loose pants tied at the waist with a thin piece of cloth, leaving the rest of the trousers flowing. Whenever the people of Hungab visited other areas, this mode of dress was always commented on as *Nohungaban*. In the course of time the people coming from the kampong were called *Hungab*.

Peter's mother, Minjaim Lim, was half-Chinese. His maternal grandfather was a Chinese from Hong Kong while his maternal grandmother Tondipot, (Fire-Fly) was a Kadazan. In Sabah, there is a high percentage of Sino-Kadazan who speak the Kadazan language and practise the customs and traditions of the Kadazan.. There is however very little distinction between the Sino-Kadazan and the indigenous Kadazan. They have been accepted and assimilated into the Kadazan community.

One of the District Chiefs vividly remembers Peter and his proven leadership qualities even at a tender age. Recollecting he said : "At the tender age of twelve, Datuk Peter had already rendered assistance to his parents,

ploughing and harvesting padi on his father's land during the school holidays. It was his nature to help others in the padi fields especially the old. Many times he helped them carry their sacks full of padi onto the backs of the buffaloes."

"Even then he showed keeness to learn and to lead among children of his age. He tried to help them whenever they were in difficulties and would never desert them until their problems were solved. Because of such qualities, he was respected not only by children of his age but also by those older than himself."

"Whenever he found time, he used to mingle with the older boys, eager to learn from them and to seek their advice. He was a very respectful boy. He always respected the old who, in turn, had a very high opinion of him. He was also a very jovial person and could easily get along with everyone. Often he used to sit, talk and share the jokes with the elders of the Community".

A colleague who has chosen to remain anonymous recalled: "Peter's pre-school days were not without trouble. He did not enjoy the amenities of life which today's children are privileged to enjoy. Occasionally, he suffered from malnutrition and was lacking in health care owing to the absence of proper necessities and Health Centres. He too had his share of bitter experiences as a victim of the Japanese Occupation of Sabah from 1942 to 1945. It had a profound effect on his life. Though young he never wanted to taste the fruit of political hegemony again be it from the Japanese or from any other quarters. Shortage of food and daily necessities were felt everywhere in the kampongs as in other parts of Sabah. He had to depend solely on the bare nourishments provided by his parents within their limited means."

"His parents were poor farmers who lived below subsistence level. They worked hard in the padi fields to earn their livelihood. Kampong life was not all that happy or easy as it is today. They supplemented their meagre income by rearing a few pigs and chickens at the backyard of their house."

After the end of the Japanese Military Occupation in 1945, and the subsequent return to civilian rule, Peter's curiosity and eagerness to learn became more conspicuous. He did not want to go through life with reminiscences of the Occupation. He knew the only way out was the acquisition of a sound academic education. He had to learn, he had to read, for only in that way could he help his family overcome their problems.

But Peter had a formidable task. His parents were traditional farmers who believed in having extra hands for the fields. If Peter, who had been so helpful to his parents, were to leave them now for the classroom, the family would be losing a pair of extremely useful hands. His father was not in favour. Peter then turned to his mother and urged her to intervene on his behalf. There was some disagreement between his parents over his intention to go to school. Probably because of her conviction in Peter's need and quest for learning, she pursued the matter until finally she obtained her husband's consent to send young Peter to school. He was by then 8 years old.

One legacy which the British Colonial Government has left behind is its system of Education. Many parts of the Empire were primitive when the British moved in. And everywhere the British went, the Christian missionaries followed. It became a characteristic feature of the colonial administration. Though attempts were made to introduce western education as early as 1880 it was not

until 1887, with the arrival of the Christian missionaries, that education in Sabah began to have a firm foundation. Three years after the arrival of the missionaries, St. Michael's Catholic School was founded at Penampang. In 1890, that was the only school in the entire district. The school catered for students from as far as Tambunan, Bundu Tuhan and Kuala Penyu. It was here also that Peter, who was to become the *'Golden Son of the Kadazan'*, had his first education. He spent many wonderful years at St. Michael's. It was here that he was groomed for leadership.

The school was approximately two miles from his home. Good roads were practically non-existent at that time as development was confined primarily around Jesselton (Kota Kinabalu). Like other students, Peter walked to school but unlike the majority, the Mojuntins were too poor to provide him with either shoes or slippers.

He wore loose baggy trousers and a shirt resembling a piece of patch work. He could not afford a pen; it was a luxury. He had only a few text books and a pencil. Despite these difficulties, he attended school regularly. He was grateful for the chance to learn. Pride had no place for him. He was studious and assimilated his studies well. In his examinations he had no peers.

He was a popular personality while in school and endeared himself to his friends. He was in the good books of his teachers and got on well with them. Besides, he was a brilliant pupil, scoring top marks in most of the subjects. They were confident that given the right guidance he would be a successful scholar.

The task to mould him into a future leader was left to the experienced hands of Rev. Fr. Preyde, the Principal of the school. He had a profound and lasting influence on

Peter. It was from him that Peter learned the rudiments of organisational work and oratory which were to be tremendous assets to him in his future political career. Peter gleaned many values from his Principal. Rev. Fr. Preyde, helped instil in his mind the meaning of independence and the responsibilities Peter and others like him would have to shoulder as they matured into future leaders of the State. Fr. Preyde knew the tide of independence that was sweeping Asia after the Japanese Occupation would soon have its effect in Sabah. Sabah, a British Colony, would not remain so for long. With independence there would be a need for strong and highly responsible leaders. He saw in Peter the potentialities of leadership and he worked zealously to develop and nurture the inherent qualities in him.

Peter was a receptive pupil. He listened and questioned, agreed and disagreed, always prepared to concede defeat if proven wrong. Eventually, a rapport developed between pupil and teacher, a rapport that was to last until Peter met his untimely death. Fr. Pyrede was proud of his pupil because he had lived up to his expectations. When he learned of Peter's death he wept openly. For in Peter, he had not only lost his best pupil but a friend and a ray of hope.

Rev. Fr. Preyde, writing on Peter's early school days in a local church magazine, said: "As a young boy he showed initiative and spirit. I can still visualise him there in the front bench in school – he was one of the youngest and smallest in the class – bright-eyed, keen to ask and eager to know ...."

St. Michael's only catered for pupils up to standard six (present Form 1). It was the system of education at that time. But that did not deter him; he was determined to sit and pass the Overseas School Certificate Examination. He knew that only a few Kadazans had managed to pass this examination. He had a purpose in life and to fulfil it

he had to pass that examination. But how? It meant he had to travel sixteen miles each day to the Sacred Heart Secondary School at Tanjong Aru. It was another Catholic mission school.

Aware of the long distance and the cost involved to travel by other means, his eldest brother George, came to his rescue. He purchased for Peter a bicycle. On seeing it, Peter burst into tears. George can still recall how Peter viewed the new bicycle. He could not form words audible enough to thank George. Thus it was that Peter found himself peddling daily sixteen miles to school, eager to wake up early for that long ride.

It was not an experience that most of us would like to have; the roads to Jesselton were bumpy and pot-holed. To walk on it would have given him sore-feet. The surface of the road was abominable. There were pebbles and boulders everywhere. Cycling on it for sixteen miles daily was hazardous. Yet Peter persevered. His enthusiasm to complete his education spurred him on. Peter was fortunate that after the completion of one year at Sacred Heart Secondary School, he was taken in as a boarder. He stayed there to concentrate on his studies for the next two years.

His efforts and sacrifices finally paid dividends. Peter successfully passed the Overseas School Certificate Examination in 1957 thus entering the exclusive catergory of Kadazans who possessed such qualifications. In those three years of secondary education he had learned much. It was there that the problems of his people began to plague him. He wondered why so few Kadazan were successful in their examinations. He knew, if given the opportunities, many more young Kadazan like him would make the grade. The majority could not afford a good education because their parents either did not fully appreciate the value of

higher education or did not have the means. He became sensitive of his responsibilities towards his people. Those of his age can still recall an incident that occured while he was still a student. A woman living at Kg. Hungab was in distress. Her house was affected by the stench of a decaying carcass. Various attempts were made by the woman to get the authorities to remove the carcass and clear the blockage from her drains. But her pleas were of no avail. The news spread and eventually reached Peter who was at home for the school holidays.

It is said that he went to visit the woman the next day and took her to see the District Officer – an Englishman, a God-like figure to most in Sabah at that time. Peter was among the very few who had the gumption to argue with the white-man. In the presence of the woman, a heated argument took place between Peter and the District Officer. The District Officer was very impressed.

Peter was in Form IV then. The woman could not resist spreading the news about the incident at the District Office. Only Form IV, already a pride of Kg. Hungab !

The years passed. Besides being a brillant student, he was an excellent sportsman. He evolved into an extraordinary personality. He became a dynamic and progressive politician who stood up for his principles and during the brief involvement in politics, he occupied the limelight in the Malaysian political stage.

Political Metamorphosis

Having attained some degree of success in the academic and athletic fields, Peter's abilities began to be noticed. The elders in the *Kampongs*, the teachers who taught him and the conscious public were filled with admiration. They had high expectations and saw in him, a potential Kadazan leader, who would perhaps some day contribute much to the upliftment of thier community. The Kadazan at that time were scattered in various districts of Sabah although large concentrations were found at Penampang, Tuaran, Keningau, Kudat, Ranau, Tambunan, Kuala Penyu and some areas in the East Coast. The majority were confronted with serious socio-economic problems, as the colonial administrators did not do much to improve their lot. There was no single administrative unit to co-ordinate, supervise and administer remedial socio-economic programmes for the Kadazan community. The few academically qualified Kadazan, could perceive the problem; they were in a dilemma. Very few were prepared to offer their services. The majority took the line of least resistance. They were not prepared to put service before self. The majority gave priority to self-enrichment.

Peter refused to conform to established norms and had no qualms about the consequences. His community, the

Kadazan, came first. He knew and was convinced that he could contribute something for his people. More important, he knew that his people needed him, more than did his friends and family. He knew that his children and his children's children would always be called Kadazan. The Kadazan would grow in number rather than shrink in the coming years.

If he, who was in a position to do something for his people, chose to be indifferent and cultivated a negative attitude, then he could not blame anyone but himself should posterity indict him as a failure to his people. That was a stigma which Peter knew he could not live with. It was at this cross-roads of his life that Peter decided to dedicate his entire life to the service of his people – a decision that was to cause him agonising moments in many aspects of his life, resulting ultimately in his premature death at the age of 37.

There are various types of politicians in any Society; they are more varied and diverse if they are in a developing country. Some enter the political arena after graduating from University; others wait until they have retired from government service while the rest may choose to accumulate a wealth of experience by working and sampling the various professions. Peter chose the latter. He worked in as many establishments as possible before entering public service. This accumulation of experience gave him an edge over most other politicians and he invariably stole the limelight from them.

Peter was by nature a generous person who usually tried to reciprocate favours. He felt an intense urge, a compulsion, to repay the kindness accorded him by the Christian Brothers during the formative years of his life. He could not refuse the offer to teach at St. Michael's when his services were called upon. Most of the teachers at St.

Michael's at that time possessed lower qualifications. They had primary six certificates. Peter was keen to teach at St. Michael's because the school was in Penampang, a populous Kadazan district. Here the majority of the Kadazan future leaders, more important, the future Kadazan intellectuals, professionals and community leaders were receiving their early education. He was proud to have a stake in their future.

Peter wanted to be there, at the very source, to probe the failures, to remedy the faults and to encourage the diligent. He knew that if the Kadazan students could have a sound academic foundation during the first six years of their education, their secondary education and subsequently their post secondary education would register a higher degree of success.

In 1958 he enrolled himself as a teacher at St. Michael's School, Penampang. With him were other dedicated teachers such as Fredrick Tan. Together the two expanded the extra curricular activities of the school with particular emphasis on the scout movement. He had a natural flair for organising activities and the students took a great liking for him. They brought their problems to him and helped him whenever their services were required. In less than a year at St. Michael's, Peter began to show a high sense of leadership. He was always keen and ready to help organise functions.

Most of his contemporaries seem to agree that the majority of the students and even teachers, were responsive to his leadership. They recall that whenever Peter called for a meeting, many attended and listened attentively. He had a magnetic personality and attracted many admirers. He could appreciate and understand their problems and needs and endeared himself to them. Had he been a missionary, he might have become a great "fisher of men." That he did not is a blessing in disguise for Peter the politician was

later to save the Church from persecution and possible annihilation.

On several occasions Peter took up grievances on behalf of other teachers. He could not condone the double standards of his superiors. Many times he was heard arguing with the school principal over matters which most of the time did not concern him. That was the nature of the man. His concern for his fellow men helped to increase their respect for him. His reward came in 1959 when his enthusiasm in the Scout Movement and sense of leadership were acknowledged. He was selected to represent Sabah in the World Jamboree at Manila. This was a rare privilege, especially for a Kadazan. His parents and the Kadazan community were proud that young Peter Mojuntin was their standard bearer at an international meeting. This was the advent of numerous other meetings, both national and international, at which their golden son would be representing them with banners more colourful than at Manila.

"Dear Peter, we won't forget you ever, your jokes etc..... Wishing you continued success and happiness, from Captain & Mrs. Gil M. Lagera of 57 – 20th Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines." These words were written behind the photograph of the North Borneo Contingent to Manila. The stranger to Manila had been a resounding success.

It was during this period that Peter's relationship with Donald Stephens (Tun Fuad) began to blossom. Sabah or British North Borneo as it was formerly called, was undergoing a rapid transformation. The British Government was aware that the surge of nationalism which had swept the South East Asian region would ultimately affect their possessions in Sabah. Three years before, in 1957, Malaya had received its independence; Singapore under Lee Kuan

Yew was clamouring for independence. The British realised the inevitable was near yet selected national leaders who shared their ideals and secured their trust. In so doing they hoped to stem the tide of nationalism and independence.

In Sabah, political aspirants, with an eye on the national stage, began to mushroom. They were conscious that soon they would be called upon to shoulder the responsibilites of nationhood. Among the prominent few were Donald Stephens (Tun Fuad), Datuk G. S. Sundang and Tun Mustapha bin Datuk Harun.

Though the three of them were patriarchs of their political parties, they were all in search of reliable lieutenants to lead their movement. It was Donald Stephens who first noticed the growing talents of the precocious Mojuntin, who was later to be of immense value to him. Peter had then left St. Michael's and was working as an Executive Cadet with the Commonwealth Development Corporation, an organisation established by the Colonial Government through the Colonial Development Act. The Corporation was originally known as the Colonial Development Fund. As early as 1930 the Chartered Company had agreed to participate in its schemes, consequently some roads were constructed and bituminised; maternity clinics and Welfare centres were erected. Peter worked here to accumulate experience.

It was while working at the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) that he was selected to undergo a specialised leadership course in the Outward Bound School in Lumut, Perak, in Peninsular Malaysia. Courses are held periodically and youth leaders from all over Malaysia are sent to the Ourward Bound School for intensive leadership training. Only a handful receive the Certificate of Merit. Young Peter, with proven leadership qualities, found no difficulty in measuring up to expectations and obtained the

mantle of fame.

While working at the CDC, Peter began to occupy his time with the youths of his community especially those in his neighbourhood. He was responsible in transforming the Penampang Kadazan Youths Association into a state wide organisation – *The Kadazan Youth Association*. More than a hundred branches were established throughout the state in a matter of months. The Kadazan Youth Association was meant to be a social organisation; it was however extremely political in reality. Its members became the backbone of Peter as well as the Kadazan's political involvement in subsequent years.

Peter's desire to expand his knowledge soon found him accepting a more exciting job in the newspaper business. Prompted by the encouragement of Tun Fuad, Peter joined the North Borneo News, an English daily, now known as the Kinabalu Sabah Times. Peter's function at the North Borneo News was primarily to act as a personal assistant to Tun Fuad. Peter was now at the threshold of the political arena.

Here at the 'North Borneo News' he met and discussed with many prominent personalities both local and foreign. He read extensively and soon grew acquainted with the intrigues and counter-intrigues that were rife during the formative years of Sabah's independence.

His term as Tun Fuad's assistant with the 'North Borneo News' did not have a long lease. It acted merely as a spring board to give him that extra propulsion, prior to launching himself into the murky waters of Sabah's politics.

It was Tun Fuad who drew Peter into politics. It was he who enticed Peter to discard the CDC employment and join the Newspaper business. This intimacy between Peter Mojuntin and Tun Fuad developed and on many

occasions, determined Sabah's political course. Such was their destiny.

In a few years, Peter appeared to have completed his apprenticeship. Having sampled a variety of experiences, he was groomed to assume a more arduous task, the role of a full time politican. The novice learnt quickly and soon became a bulwark of democracy.

Independence

The road to Self-Government for this Northern enclave of Borneo was imminent. The end of the Second World War and the annexation of Labuan as a Crown Colony were preludes to the final proclamation of Independence for Sabah. British North Borneo (Sabah) had since August 1881, upon receipt of a Charter from the British Government, become a property of the Chartered Company of North Borneo. The Japanese Occupation of the territory in 1942 compelled the Chartered Company to liquidate. The territory assumed the status of a Crown Colony in 1946 after it was liberated.

As an initial step to Self-Rule, the British Government introduced a nominated Legislative and an Executive Council. The Governor was the Head of State assisted by a Commander-in-Chief. The Legislative was eventually extended to include 4 Unofficial members appointed by the Governor and 3 Official members. In all there were eighteen nominated members.

These arrangements seemed to satisfy the people momentarily. Though contented under the umbrella of British protection and managed by an efficient adminstration, the desire to decide for themselves and to control

their own resources, were burning within them. Nationalism had reached the shores of Sabah. They knew that the British Government was syphoning off their wealth from their rich timber lands to the Home Government at the expense of the local inhabitants. There were meagre development projects in isolated areas. The people very often resented the decisions made by the British administrators but because they were a subject people they had to abide by those decisions. They knew that the interiors needed more roads to link with the towns as the roads could help open the doors for the development of the interiors. These vital infra-structures were missing. Sabah with its vast hinterland of timber was left undeveloped. These were some of the causes for the growing frustrations.

The spark that ignited the flame of independence for Sabah came in May 1961. The Prime Minister of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman, at a Press luncheon in Singapore, spoke about the viability of a new Federation of Malaysia, incorporating the territories of Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo States. The proposal sent shock waves not only to the peoples of the affected terrritories but also the neighbouring Governments. The envious conceived it as a British ploy supported by the Americans to check the Communist influence in this region. Others saw it as an opportunity for the subject territories such as Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak, to free themselves from the British colonial yoke. The proposal evoked strong opposition from President Soekarno of Indonesia who subsequently declared an armed confrontation against the Government of Malaysia. The Philippines fabricated a claim and beat the war drums to thwart the formation of Malayisa. Neither the Philippines claim to Sabah nor the Indonesian confrontation daunted the spirit of the masses. On the contrary, they helped to consolidated the unity of the masses and also provided that extra incentive which was needed for a successful realisation of Malaysia.

In Sabah, the Malaysia concept was received with mixed feelings. There were fears, confusion and anxieties. Malaysia was discussed by people of all walks of life, by the elite and the commoner; in urban areas and the interior districts. Community leaders feared that unless they united and formed political entities, presenting petitions and proposals, their interests migh be jeopardised. Bilateral talks between the Malayan and British Governments, would not be in their best interests. The Chinese wanted their interests to be guaranteed and so did the Kadazan and other indigenous people. It was desirable that Sabahans were represented at the talks to safeguard their interests.

It was during this period that Donald Stephens (Tun Fuad) wrote to the Malayan Prime Minister, expressing his apprehensions and anxieties over the Malaysia concept.

In a detailed letter, he concluded that Malaysia would not succeed because of its hetrogenous ethnic composition; its diversity of culture; that Christianity being the predominant religion of Sabah would be dissimilar to the national religion. He also had some fears that the Kadazan would not benefit from Malaysia.

That letter was made public and published in the local newspapers. After its publication, the Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, invited Tun Fuad to Kuala Lumpur to allay his fears. According to an associate of Tun Fuad, the Tunku did not convince Donald Stephens. The Tunku had to seek the assistance of his Singapore counterpart. Lee Kuan Yew, who finally managed to convince Donald Stephens that the merger of the four territories into one nation was a political necessity.

In the wake of these developments, political parties began to mushroom, each claiming to represent the interests

of the masses or a section of them. Tun Fuad Stephens established an important political party for the Kadazan Community — The United National Kadazan Organisation (UNKO) in August 1961. Though only twenty two years old at that time, Peter Mojuntin resumed the responsibilities of an Assistant Secretary-General. He later became its Secretary-General. Peter was then the chairman of UNKO youths. He was still working with the Commonwealth Development Corporation when UNKO was formed. Peter worked tirelessly in Penampang to explain to the older people who did not know anything about independence; who whenever they saw a European, bowed their heads and took off their hats. The time had come to change this servile attitude. Equally important was the United Sabah National Organisation (USNO) led by Tun Mustapha bin Datuk Harun. Dato G. S. Sundang organised the National Pasok Momogun Organisation (NPMO) and of lesser importance were the Democratic Party, The United Party and the Liberal Party.

The formation of Malaysia was welcomed by the British Government who saw it as a means to check the gravity of Communist influence in the region. The Borneo territories had a common border with Indonesia. The Indonesian islands were at that period of time the citadel of Communism in the Malay Archipelago. The PKI or Parti Komunist Indoesia was a constant threat to the Borneo territories. The British Government was prepared to hand over responsibility of the territories if an acceptable formula could be found. The Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, was invited to London for discussions in order to arrive at an understanding of the important issues and to prepare the way for consultation with the Borneo territories.

Discussions on Malaysia began on the 20th November

1961, and on the 23rd November a consensus of opinion was reached and a joint statement was issued.

"(1) In a series of meetings in London this week British and Malayan Ministers examined the proposal to create a 'Federation of Malaysia' which would embrace the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei".

"(2) In the light of a full study of the problem which has been going on for some months, the British and Malayan Governments are convinced that this is a desirable aim."

"(3) Before coming to any final decision, it is necessary to ascertain the views of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak. It had accordingly been decided to set up a Commission to carry out this task and to make recommendations. The Commission will be composed of a Chairman and four members, two nominated by the British Government and two by the Malayan Government. In the light of th Commission's report, the two Governments will decide what further steps should be taken."

News was rife that a Commission (Cobbold Commission) had been established and would soon be visitng Sabah and Sarawak in order to ascertain the sentiments of the people. The UPKO, like other political parties, was busy organising and expanding its base. Peter, as Secretary General, was entrusted the important task of preparing a memorandum for submission to the Commission — a memorandum that would in the first instance reflect the feelings of the Kadazan Community and in general voice the entire misgivings of the multi-racial population of Sabah. In carrying out this arduous task, Peter had to travel extensively throughout the innermost districts of Sabah, establishing party branches and holding discussions with members of his community. Initially, like the Chinese, the Kadazan too were apprehensive of the Malaysia concept. They feared they would

be overwhelmed by the indigenous population of Malaya who would creep into all sectors of their administration and economy, depriving them of their legitimate rights. It took some convincing by Tun Fuad before Peter could accept the validity of a Malaysian nation. But once convinced, Peter worked extremely hard in trying to convince his friends and foes that only through Malaysia could Sabah obtain its independence.

In April 1962, the Cobbold Commission on Malaysia visited Sabah. By that time, the United National Kadazan Organisation had established over 60 branches. The Party's indefatigable Secretary-General, Peter Mojuntin, had prepared an exhaustive memorandum representing the collective views and aspirations of the Kadazan Community. Among the more important aspects of the memorandum were :

(i) For the Kadazan there can be no other guarantee for their future than for North Borneo to obtain independance by joining Malaysia. Self-Government first would mean that the heirs, when the British leave would be the Chinese, owing to their educational and economic superiority. This in turn could lead to domination by Communism.

(ii) The best security for the future of all the former and the present British territories in South East Asia lies in their getting together to form Malaysia, a strong viable unit which can play a real part in Commonwealth defence.

(iii) Only through Malaysia, with a happy multi-racial country like Malayisa, supplying proof that Communism can be solved, can the racial problems of the Borneo territories also be solved. The extension of special privileges to the native peoples will give them a chance to catch up with their more advanced Chinese brothers.

(iv) Unless Malaysia comes about, there may well be a claim to the Borneo territories from elsewhere.

(v) The extension to the Borneo territories of the vigorous work on rural development in Malaya will help the natives to find a new spirit to work for themselves and their country.

The United National Kadazan Organisation also wanted further safeguards to be incorporated into the Malaysia Agreement. Being a Party comprising primarily of non-Muslims, the UNKO sought the following guarantees :

(a) Religion

A clear statement should be made in the new Constitution that although Islam may be the religion of the Federation, it will not be forced on North Borneo as the religion of the State.

(b) Language

Malay is acceptable as the National Language but English should be used as an official language, without any time limit. In Kadazan areas, Kadazan should be taught in the schools.

(c) Special privileges

The many Kadazan of mixed blood should be eligible for the special privileges to which the indigenous peoples will be entitled if the recommendations of the Malaysian Solidarity Consultative Committee are accepted. Customary right to land and Kadazan customs traditions and culture, should be fully respected and protected.

(d) Immigration

To be under State Control

(e) Representation in Federal Parliament

This should be much larger than any of the States in the Federation of Malaya and much larger than Singapore.

In the Senate, North Borneo should have eight members.

(f) Taxation

Changes to bring parity to other states in Malaysia should be made gradually.

It was a comprehensive memorandum, detailing several pertinent aspects, vital for all Sabahans, primarily to the Kadazan Community. It was the brain-child of Donald Stephens and Peter J. Moujuntin who had toiled hard to compile it. The majority of its recommendations were accepted by the Cobbold Commission and incorporated into the Malaysian Constitution.

The following year, September 1963, the Federation of Malaysia was declared, uniting the territories of Peninsular Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. It was the birth of a new nation comprising heterogeneous ethnic groups, with diverse and multiple cultures, religions, languages, characteristics and norms, with no individual racial group with claim to pre-eminence. For the Kadazan, it meant a new beginning, a new challenge and hopefully a brighter future.

They knew that to achieve success, they had to unite. Division and petty squabbles would only detract them from their planned objectives. This led to the unification of the Kadazan National Organisation (UNKO) and the National Pasok-Momogun Organisation (NPMO). It was inevitable for the two parties to merge in order to ensure a greater and more consolidated representation for the Kadazan Community. The NPMO was in acute financial straits after their Chinese supporters cried off. Further more they feared that being divided, they would get less seats in the nominated Assembly. They soon realised the futility of remaining divided; that others would capitalise on their weakness. Political necessity (the need for survival) led

to a merger.

In May 1964, the two political parties finally merged into a single political unit – The United Pasok-Momogun Kadazan Organisation (UPKO). At its inception, Peter Mojuntin was unanimously elected Secretary-General, primarily because of his proven capabilities and his selfless devotion to work for his community.

Thus ended the months of verbal war between the two Kadazan political parties. Both had originally laid claim to the sole legitimate right to represent the Kadazan Community. However, the majority of the leaders managed to keep a cool head and throughout the exchanges, arguments and accusations, kept their doors open for constructive discussions. It was here and largely through the efforts of Peter and the Kadazan youths, who were instrumental in creating a bridge between the two opposing forces, that lengthy discussions and negotiations were conducted with Dato Sundang which finally led to the happy marriage of the two parties.

The merging of the two parties was a milestone in fostering unity and solidarity in the Kadazan Community.

It was a great achievement for Peter whose efforts helped the leaders of the two parties to agree on common issues affecting their community. Peter Mojuntin scored yet another victory in his short political career. His efforts helped to cement the brotherhood of the entire Kadazan community, irrespective of where they dwelled, in Penampang or Renau, in Tuaran or Keningau, in Kuala Penyu or Tambunan, in Kudat or in parts of the East Coast. With the merging of the two Kadazan Parties, they became one people, with one voice to speak for them. This unique unity among the Kadazan had on several occasions rendered invaluable service to

the State and country. It helped turn the tide of history and helped to shape the destiny of their community, their State and country, in the years that followed. Later chapters will give testimony to this fact and show that had it not been for this solidarity, many disastrous episodes might have marred the History of this beautiful 'Land below the Winds'.

The house in Kg. Hungab where Peter was born.

Mrs. Minjamin Lim — Peter's mother.

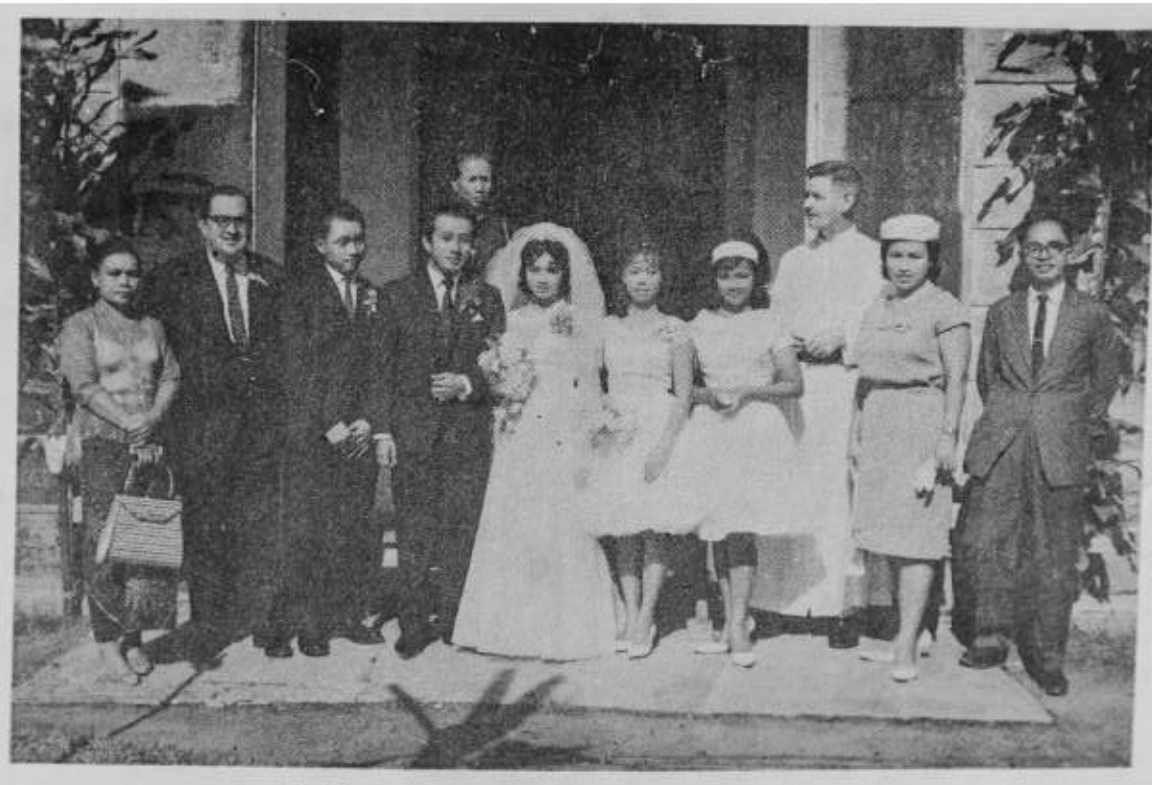
Aged 16, Peter at Sacred Heart School, Tanjong Aru.

A keen photographer at 19.

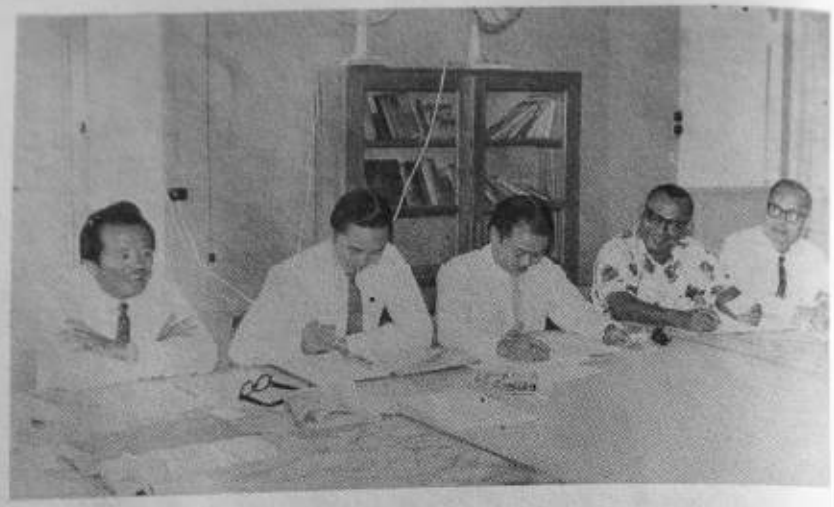
North Borneo Contingent to Scout Jamboree, Manila 1959.
Peter is squatting 2nd from the left.

Peter and the class of '58 (primary six)

Peter and Nancy in traditional Kadazan costume with children.



'Wedding of the Year' in Penampang – 9th May, 1961.



At a PAX (Pastoral Council) meeting with friends.

Doing the 'SUMAZAU' – (Traditional Kadazan Dance) with a Bobohizan' (Kadazan Priestess) during Harvest Festival.

Youth & Marriage

Often it appears that the life of a public figure is 'glamorous'. The mass media trails him wherever he goes, splashing exciting glimpses of his life. Only his close associates are aware of the demands that habitually confront him. Beneath the glamour of his charisma, lies the sleepless nights, the endless journeys away from home, family and party quarrels and the daily complaints from the constituents which require attention.

Problems and demands if unattended or neutralised in time, would only accumulate and multiply, reaching dangerous proportions which would either end up in chaos or divert the course of action. A public representative has a responsibility towards his family, his constituency, the State and Country and the Party he represents. In his own manner and approach, and guided by his conscience, he has to contribute what he believes is best for those that he has chosen to serve. And the yardstick of his success, in the eyes of the electorate, is his ability to utilise the limited time at his disposal to serve the majority of his constituents. He must be prepared to sacrifice and even to compromise principles and obligations which under normal circumstances, he would regard as tantamount to betrayal.

At home, his wife and children wait patiently for his return. His spouse spends sleepless nights worrying about both his and the family's well-being. The children do not receive sufficient attention and sometimes grow up without adequate paternal care. The situation is further aggravated if on his return, he is beset with local meetings which deprive him of the precious little time he has for his family. It is these strenuous circumstances that a politican with a family is compelled to face. Sometimes this strain has a nasty habit of snapping, thus breaking up an otherwise harmonious and contented family life.

Peter Mojuntin agreed to accept this challenge which eventually proved to oe an even bigger sacrifice than he had ever anticipated because his preoccupation with his vocation to serve his people, left him hardly any time for his family.

Of the numerous feminine admirers that were trying to capture Peter's heart, one seemed always to be in the lead, his next-door sweetheart – Nancy Mary Mobijohn. Like him, she too is a Kadazan. Living in the same village and blossoming with beauty as the years passed by, it was not surprising for young Peter to be attracted to this sweet Kadazan girl, the daughter of Lidwin Mobijohn and Nora Sipanil, both from traditional Kadazan families.

Even while students, they had mutual feelings and a strong sense of silent attraction prevailed but tradition and customs limited their display of affection to one of exchanging coquettish glances. They knew that matrimony was the domain of their parents. Peter and Nancy dared not take the initial step. Datin Nancy can still recall how Peter used to frequent her house.

"He came individually to chat with my father or collectively, with a group of boys, under various pretexts, so that we could just see each other." She admitted that

she was equally curious about the young Kadazan lad whom everyone in the village seemed to be talking about. His scholastic achievements and the Jamboree in Manila, only helped to enhance her interest in him. Nancy admits that she often thought of him while in school, during the cold lonely nights and whenever someone mentioned his name. But she wondered why he had never expressed nor spoken of his inner-most feelings whenever they had the opportunity of being together. Most of his friends had at one time or another, told her how they felt for her but never Peter. She could not help thinking that he might have another girl some place else. It could not be true. She refused to entertain the thought. It was a source of great worry for Nancy. She wondered whether she should take the initial step. She could not let Peter walk out of her life.

It was during this period that she was constantly teased by Tun Fuad who used to playfully warn her to be careful because there was someone eyeing her. However it was not until August 1963, on the eve of his departure to the United Nations as Malaysia's representative that Peter managed to summon enough courage to propose an engagement. Nancy was then a student in Form IV.

Peter was away at the United Nation's for three months. Nancy lived through three months of torture, not so much because Peter was away but because of the mental anguish in school. Practically everyone in school was interested to know when she would be getting married. In class, whenever she failed to answer a question, the teacher would accuse her of thinking of nothing but marriage. Prior to her engagement, she never received such criticisms or insults. Unable to withstand it anymore, she left school in December 1963. Neither her parents nor Peter could dissuade her. Peter returned from the United Nations a few days after she left school.

Describing the events that followed, Datin Nancy said: "Having accepted the fact that I had left school, Peter began to contemplate marriage. He visited me as often as he could and we went out, whenever he had an evening off. It was on one of those rare evenings that Peter proposed that we fix a day for our wedding."

"At that time, I was so madly in love with him, I would have done anything he asked me, probably even gone back to school. But I knew Peter would prefer me as Mrs. Peter Mojuntin rather than his student girl friend. We both agreed it would be 9th May 1961, the first day of the Harvest Festival. We informed Peter's parents and in accordance with Kadazan customs, our parents met and finalised the arrangements.

Penampang had probably never witnessed a more significant wedding. It was more auspicious because it coincided with the Harvest Festival. Thousand of Kadazans came from all over Sabah to participate in the Harvest Festival. The majority came and joined in the wedding celebrations.

Describing the events that occured the next day, Datin Nancy recalled: "Tun Fuad gave us a party in his residence in honour of our wedding. Most of the state dignitaries were present. Half–way through the party, at approximately 10.30 p.m., someone from home telephoned to inform us that Kampong Hungab was flooded. That was the first flood the kampong ever had in living memory. We left the party and dashed home in Peter's car."

"We were both dressed in the traditional Kadazan wedding costumes. When we arrived, we saw the water was very high. We were unable to gauge its depth. If I had ever been embarrassed, that was the most embarrassing moment

of my life. Hardly twenty-four hours after our wedding, I had to strip in public except for my bra and underclothes. Peter also took everything off except his inner garments."

"What a sight ! What must the others have thought seeing us in that manner ? But we had to get to the house and try salvaging whatever there was to salvage. The fear of getting our traditional Kadazan wedding costumes wet compelled us to take them off."

Describing their family life, Datin Nancy said: "Peter was a loving and understanding husband during our twelve years of married life. He had often left it to me, to make my own decisions and allowed me to do whatever I wanted, in the interest of the family. At times, we had differences of opinion, as in other families, but they were discussed and failures were forgiven in the true Christian spirit."

Datin Nancy has five children, three boys and two girls. The eldest, Donald Mojuntin, was named after Peter's mentor – Donald Stephens (Tun Fuad), the second son, Charles Mojuntin; the third, a daughter Ester Mojuntin; the fourth, Peter Lawrence Jr. and the youngest Deidre Mojuntin.

Busy as he was, Peter always found time to spend with his children, whenever he was at home. Like most fathers, he had high aspirations for his children and wanted them to secure higher academic achievements. Peter's sudden demise robbed Nancy of a most loving and understanding husband and her children, a kind and affectionate father and friend.

The Kadazan Youth Organisation or better known as *Sinompuuvan Komuhakan Kadazan Sabah* (S.K.K.S.), acted on several occasions as a vehicle of change and at other times as a political bridge. To a very large extent, it was instrumental in the amalgamation of the two Kadazan political parties, the United National Kadazan Organisation (UNKO) and the Pasok Momogun Party. The youths actively opposed the Indonesian Confrontation and the Philippines Claim to Sabah. Peter's role in the Youth Movement is best described by Francis Chu, one of his comtemporaries.

Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin was a man of action and strong principles. He believed in justice and freedom so much that he gave his life towards the achievement of both for his people. As a youth leader of his time he was farsighted and wasted no time in his effort of uniting the Kadazan in order to fight for their advancement. With the Youth Organisation that he initiated he played a major role in instilling the spirit of Nationalism. He also fostered co-operation and goodwill with the youths of other racial origins in the State. At a later stage, he was instrumental in the unification of the two Kadazan-dominated Parties – the Pasok Momogun and the UNKO. The S.K.K.S. which was formed on 14th April 1963 with Peter Mojuntin as its first President, was the beginning of the Kadazan Youths march to unity among themselves."

"Later on, the S.K.K.S. established branches all over the State and within a few years it became widely known with the late Datuk at its helm. This youth organisation also played its part in the formation of Malaysia. It openly denounced the Indonesian Confrontation as well as the Philippines Claim to Sabah."

"During the first few years of the Organisation's growth, Peter Mojuntin was the key figure in building up its strength.

The elders suspected that Peter was leading the youths to overthrow the elders in the Party and the youths who had wrong impressions of Datuk Peter were thinking that Peter was leading their brothers to their doom. Some sophisticated people went all out to destroy the new found unity of the Kadazan youths and they openly said that Peter Mojuntin was gathering youths in one group in order to sell them to Donald Stephens who would in turn sell them to Kuala Lumpur. Despite all these accusations it was apparent that the Youths were solidly united and gave him their unstinting support. The strong unity of the Kadazan youths and their support for Peter Mojuntin advanced the political position of the Kadazan. The Kadazan were now able to voice their opinions effectively. The political awakening of the Kadazan people was so strong that the Government could no longer ignore their views. Their demand for justice, equality and better educational facilities were chanelled to the Government in a single voice. The S.K.K.S.' achievements both in the social and political field speak well for itself. The importance of Education, Culture, Politics and Religion were strongly emphasised by Peter. It is apparent that the doctrine of Peter Mojuntin has found its mark in Sabah."

"When he was the youth leader he urged the Kadazan youths to work closely with youth of other racial origins. He said that co-operation and goodwill would eventually create a strong multi-racial society within a multi-racial nation and in time to come all true Malaysians of this Nation could proudly defend the country's tradition and the people's heritage."

"In many political speeches, he was highly critical of those who posed in the guise of gentle lamb. His friends were inspired by his words and deeds. His enemies knew that the party was over. Peter was to join the ranks of the legendary."

"It must be admitted that Datuk Peter did not become the man he was, praised and loved by the people, without going through thick and thin. He went through the mill, disciplining himself with strict principles of love and sacrifice. His youth leadership training and his social services that were voluntarily given to the people during his younger days helped to prepare him in his future role as a firm politican of high standing. There were many occasions when he had to leave his family behind to trod over the hills and across rivers in a long trek to the rural areas of his constituency to visit and ensure the people he represented and loved were faring well. His many trips to various districts both within and outside his constituency have made him unforgettable. To this day many still do not believe that he has gone over the mountain, never to be back. The people who adore him still believe that the spirit of this Golden Son of the Kadazan has not departed but is still with them." A glowing tribute indeed to the memory of Peter Mojuntin.

"His departure, so sudden and abrupt, was painful to the people. The fateful day of 6th June 1976 robbed Sabah of a truly dedicated leader. It robbed the Kadazan Community of a true and genuine representative who was always thoughtful of his people, a truly young *Huguan Siou* of the Kadazans and the people of Sabah. The passing of Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin, PGDK., MLA., from this world of men was a great shock and caused profound grief; words fail to express my profound loss. I remember his words which still ring in my ears. 'A strong Malaysia requires the assurance of full and equal rights to all its citizens of any race or any colour and creed.' The Kadazan and others weep for him but we mourn for Sabah and for Malaysia because they have lost a leader of great goodwill who devoted his talents and energies to peace, justice and understanding."

Grass Roots Politics

Prior to 1967, elections for Local Councils and Municipalities were held throughout the country. Local elections are one of the three political processes which most Commonwealth countries are familiar with. The State Assembly and Parliamentary elections are the other two. However, in the mid-sixties, several Municipalities and Local Councils were captured by opposition parties, in democratically conducted elections. In some of these institutions, the administration was inefficient and on the threshold of bankruptcy. Using this inefficiency as an excuse the Government decided to abolish all Local and Municipal elections. This action on grass-roots politics was in reality an attempt to smother oppostion. Though it was initially pointed out that the suspension of the elections was a temporary move and steps would be taken to restore local elections after the Royal Commission of Inquiry had concluded its findings, the promise was not honoured.

The *Royal Commission on Local Council Elections* had in fact recommended that elections for Local Councils and the Municipalities should be held with a few modifications but the Government ignored its recommendations. Thus no elections have been held for Local Councils and Municipalities since their suspension in 1967.

To the majority, the suspension of Local Council and Municipal elections for an indefinite period is a clear indication of the government's fear of losing control of these important areas. It is a foregone conclusion that if elections are held at this level, the opposition would triumph by a landslide. It is unfortunate that this fear has deprived many aspiring politicans and future leaders of the country from acquiring political and administrative experience and expertise at the grass roots level. For it is here, at the Municipal and Local Councils, that the elementary rules of politics, administrative procedures and fundamental issues of public welfare are discussed and important decisions made.

To deprive an aspiring politician the opportunity of accumulating these rudimentary experience, is not only a great loss to him but a greater loss to the nation.

In Sabah, Peter's experience with the Local Council centred around the Kota Kinabalu Rural District Council. It was originally known as the Jesselton Rural District Council when it was established on 1st January 1958 under the Colonial Administration. The Council had 15 nominated members with the District Officer as President. The members served for a term of three years.

When Sabah obtained independence through Malaysia in 1963, direct elections of Council Members were held. From then on the Council comprised 8 elected members and 4 nominated councillors.

The first local elections in Sabah were held in May 1963 and the Penampang representative was Richard Yap. He was the Council's first elected Chairman. However, he held the position for only a year because of his appointment as Sabah's Health Minister. He resigned as a Councillor in May 1966 and in a by-election for his seat, Peter Mojuntin

was elected. It did not take long for Peter's abilities to be noticed by other Council members. After the first State direct elections in 1967, Peter J. Mojuntin was elected the Chairman of the Kota Kinabalu Rural District Council. He held the position for three years till 1971.

Peter returned to lead the District Council again on 25th January 1972. He was then Assistant Minister of Industrial Development. Peter was the Chairman until his resignation on the 10th February, 1975. He resigned in order to concentrate on the formation of the new party, Berjaya, which was officially inaugurated five months later.

It would be a grievous omission not to mention the achievements of Peter Mojuntin during his Chairmanship of the Kota Kinabalu Rural District Council. During those six years, the Council made remarkable progress. Revenue increased and construction for industrial and development projects were undertaken. The *Dewan Masyarakat* Tun Fuad was erected and the Council office was planned and constructed during his tenure of office. A net-work of roads and bridges was also constructed to provide better transport facilities for the Kampong people. The plans for a new township for Penampang consisting of 96 units of shop houses, a theatre and other public amenities were also finalised.

To focus some attention on the achievements of Peter J. Mojuntin and his success as a Rural District Councillor, I have decided to reproduce extracts of his last speech which was tabled as a Report at the Council Meeting at Penampang on 7th February 1975, three days before he resigned as Chairman and member of the Council.

Penampang

Today is the twelfth year of the Council since being formed by elected Councillors in May 1963 and the 17th year since it was first established by appointed members on 1st January 1958.

Considering the short period of its existence this Council should rightly feel proud of the remarkable progress it has made as shown by the fact that we now have our own office building. I would like to outline some of the major activities and achievements of the Council as follows:

Physical changes/developments

During the year 1974 the Council areas continued to progress rapidly with the increased construction of houses and industries. To date the building of a total of 2,646 units of houses in various housing estates consisting of 175 units of shophouses have been approved excluding private dwelling houses.

Rates and Revenues

Up to today, there has been no revision of the rates of revenue currently levied by the Council at 5% on all dwelling houses and 10% on commercial and industrial buildings. In spite of this, the Revenue of the Council has remarkably increased since 1968.

Projects in 1974

Construction works on the Community Centre and Council Office projects which were started in April 1973 are now completed.

All Government Departments in Penampang, formerly housed in the old District Office Building, are now accomodated in this new Council Office Building since January 1975.

The second stage of construction works for the $1.5 million sewerage scheme for Penampang and Reservoir Road areas has been started since August, 1974. This second stage involves the construction of sewage treatment works, pumping stations and pumping mains. With the completion of this scheme it is hoped that most of the housing estates and other related developments in the two vicinities will be catered for and any future developments may not be required to provide their own Central Unit Sewerage System.

Submission to the Government has also been made regarding the proposed Incinerator do dispose of garbage. This project is considered not only necessary but urgent in view of the fact that the present garbage dumping ground at Mile 5 Tuaran Road which is shared by the Town Board and the Council has been earmarked for industrial development. Moreover, SEDCO has already started site works for its multi-industrial development within the area. This project will also help to control the breeding of flies and mosquitoes that spread diseases like malaria and dengue fever.

The Council will continue to request the State Government's P.W.D. to take responsibility of maintaining housing estate roads (which in most cases are now in deteriorating condition). As for the Council roads, I directed the Executive Officer to make the submission to the Ministry of Communication and Works as soon as possible.

I do hope that the P.W.D. would speed up looking into the situation of storm drains which accomodate the outflow from the various roadside and estate drains with a view to remedy the off and on flooding in certain areas of the Council.

Highways

I like to put here on record that because of the delayed implementation of the proposed Urban Motorway from Mile 5 Tuaran Road via Reservoir Road and Penampang Road to Kapayan, the Council has been faced with problems when considering development plans submitted by Developers. I hope also that P.W.D. will complete the building of the Urban Motorway and improve the conditions of the main roads in the industrial estate at Mile 5 (Nountun Bahru).

Penampang Town

The plan for the new Penampang Township comprising 96 units of shophouses and a cinema site plus other facilities is almost finalised. A standing Committee was formed to deal with this matter.

Tamus

I hope the Council will continue to improve the Tamus and whenever necessary to establish new one. The tamus have proved very successfui and very beneficial to the local producers/farmers of foodstuffs and also the public consumers who can buy fresh food-stuffs at cheaper bargain prices.

Extension of the Civic Centre – must be started now especially the acquisition of lands to accomodate the Public Library, Youth Centre, Open Tennis/Badminton/Basket Ball/VolleyBall/Sepak takraw courts, Public swimming pools and enough parking spaces and children's play-ground. These are all essential recreational/public services.

In future it will be very difficult to centralise such services which are badly needed in Penamapng as shown by the popular use of the Penampang Town Padang and the Community Centre, which is not yet quite completed. There

is also the need for a proper District Administrative Centre in Penamapng to accomcdate the District Office and other Government Departments.

Appreciation

I would like to thank all the members of the Council, Government Department viz. the Public Works Department, Town Planner, the Health Department, the Drainage and Irrigation Department, the two District Officers (Penampang and Kota Kinabalu) who are vice-Chairmen of the Council, and Staff of the Council for the close co-operation they have rendered to me during my tenure as Chairman of the Council. Last but not least I would like to record my sincere appreciation to the State Ministry of Local Government for its invaluable guidance and support. I hope that all of them will continue to give happy co-operation to the new Chairman of the Council.

I would like to remind all members and especially those who will be elected Chairman of this Council for 1975/76 and Chairmen of the Committees, that yours is a very responsible job. There will be more development projects and hard decisions will have to be made. I hope Councillors will never be afraid to make what they think are right decisions.

I think it is of some use that I reveal now that during my Chairmanship of the Council, I had always found it essential to discuss with officers concerned and especially the Executive Office and the District Officer Penampang before I finally made a decision.

Lastly, it is my duty to announce that as from this moment the Chairman, Chairmen and members of the various Committees cease to hold their respective offices. I hope that most if not all of you will be re-elected to your

offices for the year 1975/76. I myself have decided not to stand for re-election. I will also resign as a member of this Local Government because my duty as *Pembantu Menteri* in the State Government demands full attention. I shall recommend a most suitable person to replace me as the elected Councillor for the Penampang ward. Because there will be a by-election, I am confident our State Government will appoint a person who has the ability, support and confidence of the voters in the Penampang ward."

The Man From Penampang

The years of varied experiences, his mistakes and achievements, had mellowed young Peter. There could be no turning back from a public career. There were not many young Kadazan who were as well prepared to enter the political arena of that time as Peter Mojuntin. He had been especially groomed by his mentor, the late Tun Fuad, to shoulder the responsibilities of an independent state. He travelled extensively within the interior of Sabah, familiarising himself with the complexities and multitude of problems which were peculiar to his people and the State. He understood the people's aspirations, their problems, hopes and fears. He knew that only in identifying himself with the people and knowing their problems at first hand could he hope to understand them better and more important, to be trusted and accepted by them as their leader. These are the fundamentals before anyone can hope to be a champion of the people.

Malaysia had become a reality and independence for Sabah was imminent. The Cobbold Commission had confirmed the verdict of the overwhelming majority for a common destiny with Kuala Lumpur, Kuching and Singapore. Only the procedures remained before the transition of power from colonial rule was completed. Someone had remarked

that "Brittania rules the waves" and that "the sun would never set on the British Empire". This was a fallacy and the myth could not forestall the winds of change that descended in full cry after the Second World War. Nevertheless, British statesmanship was unparalled and unquestionable. The British abandoned neither their colonies nor their responsibilities. Statesmanship was their forte. A well trained civil service was the legacy they left behind. Throughout the Empire the transition of power was conducted peacefully and amicably. Sabah was no exception.

On 16th September, 1963, the new nation of Malaysia was born; with it, Sabah attained its independence. Tun Datuk Mustapha was nominated the first Yang DiPertua Negara and Tun Fuad the Chief Minister. Sabah was ruled by the Alliance party comprising four components viz. the United Pasok–Momogun Kadazan Organisation, the United Sabah National Organisation, the Sabah Chinese Association and the Sabah Indian Congress. In the wake of independence, the personal animosity, pride and greed for power were subdued though the embers remained glowing beneath the surface. These pressurised emotional weaknesses were bound to erupt once the excitement of independence had subsided because of the innate jealousy and uncompromising attitude of some of its less tolerant belligerent leaders.

On the political front, Peter was elected by the Legislative Council on the 25th September 1963 to represent Sabah in the Malaysian Parliament at Kuala Lumpur. His term as a Member of Parliament lasted for only a short period from 25th September 1963 to 1st March 1964. He did not contest for Parliament in the 1964 General Elections because he wanted to concentrate on his responsibilities as a Member of the Sabah Legislative Assembly. When he was a Member of Parliament, Sabah was undergoing rapid political changes. Simultaneously, the

jostling for political influence in preparation for the first general elections, enlarged the gap of misunderstanding between Tun Fuad and Tun Mustapha. As a consequence, Peter was not able to participate actively in Parliament. To him the infant state of Sabah needed to be nurtured to adulthood. However, Peter did not completely absent himself from the Malaysian Parliament. Perhaps the most impressive speech Peter ever delivered in Parliament was after his return from the United Nations. He was sent to the United Nations in October 1963 as a Malaysian Representative. There, at the United Nations General Assembly, he spoke in support of the right to self-determination for Papua New Guinea, at the 4th Decolonisation Committee meeting. He was the first Sabahan to be given the privilege of addressing the United Nations. He was then only 24 years old. While at the United Nations, he was required to counter the Indonesian claim that the formation of Malaysia was a neo-colonialist plot.

Speaking before the Malaysian Parliament on his return on the 3rd January 1964, he said:

"Just a while ago, I had the pleasure of listening to one of the speeches made by the Honourable Member from PMIP – he is not here now. He was commenting on the defence of Malaysia. He was referring in particular to the presence of the British troops in Malaysia, and I was very much interested in it. Somehow or other he gave the impression that he would like the British troops to get out of Malaysia and that he was confident that Malaysia without British aid could stand on its own feet and defend itself against Indonesia. Any Honourable Member can see the futility of this utterly nonsensical statement."

"I come from Sabah and I would like to make it clear to this House that we in Sabah feel the confrontation of

Indonesia very,very badly, but the Honourable Member, whom I am referring to, was speaking as if he could not care less what was happening in Sabah. He was afraid that the confrontation of Indonesia would spread to Kuala Lumpur and other places in Malaya, if it was not checked now in Sabah. I am not questioning the belief of the majority – if not all of the members here that we are one nation and are not regarding ourselves separately as peoples of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah, and that this confrontation of Indonesia should be regarded as a national threat actually."

"The Honourable Member, whom I am referring to, was actually playing into the hands of Soekarno who likes nothing better than to see Malaysia defenceless so that the Indonesians can just walk in, like what happened in North Korea. The Honourable Member was just saying a moment ago that, from his knowledge of the activities of the Honourable Member from Besut, he believes that he actually wanted Malaya – and I believe including Sabah and Sarawak – to be part of Indonesia. I would like to make it clear that we have nothing to do with it, we do not want it, and we do not want to be part of Indonesia. The confrontation policy of the Government of Indonesia against our new nation of Malaysia, as Honourable Members know, was taken up in the rostrum and lobbies of the United Nations Organisation by representatives of the Indonesian Government. The Indonesian representatives tried every twist and turn to embarrass Malaysia in the United Nations. They met with failure, because among other important activities there in the United Nations itself and elewhere they found themselves up against U Thant, or at least against the U.N. Secretary General's Report on our wishes in Sabah and Sarawak regarding the formation of Malaysia. Only Khrushchev's representatives came out openly to express in

one sentence only their sympathy with the Indonesian Government's view regarding Malaysia."

"With the bargaining of votes and political intrigues among 113 member states in the U.N. and considering our limited means, our mission in the U.N. has done quite well in securing a half-term membership of the Security Council of the U.N. The reason that we could not get the required two-thirds majority vote in the U.N. Eighteenth General Assembly Security Council election was the lack of a few votes, and this should provide us with food for thought concerning our external Affairs. This should not in anyway be interpreted as blaming the Ministry of External Affairs. My only reason for saying what I have said is the importance I attach to the proposed visit of the Prime Minister of Singapore to the African countries. The African countries, among others, have had their curiosity and interest aroused about Malaysia as a newly formed nation in South East Asia."

"In view of the trend of the Indonesian confrontation, I regard it imperative that we should take the initiative, in any and every way we can, to provide and inform the world generally about the factual and true picture of the Indonesian Government's aggression against Malaysia, in particular against the innocent people of Sarawak and Sabah. I say 'aggression' because to us in Sabah and Sarawak, the confrontation policy of the Indonesian Government is nothing short of aggression and a most deplorable attitude born out of the well known Soekarno complex, which we condemn unreservedly."

"Sabah, as well as Sarawak is the butt of Indonesia's aggression. Like Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak have newly emerged from the clutches of colonialism, but Indonesia is trying to bluff the world at alrge that we, the people of

Sabah and Sarawak, are sick people under the yoke of neo-colonialism – whatever Soekarno means by that word. If it means the presence of the British troops in Malaysia, we understand why the Soekarno Government does not like our Defence Agreement with Britain – maybe Indonesia wants us instead to make a defence agreement with Peking or Moscow! Anyway Indonesia should also regard the Philippines as a colonialist counrry, because of the presence of the American bases there. If neo-colonialism means the presence of the British business capital in Malaysia, then this would mean that Indonesia wants us to adopt its economic policy which is well known for its failure. We will not allow Indonesia to make a West Irian of our country, Malaysia, the eleven states of the former Federation of Malaya and the newly independent States of Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah. We have to fight Indonesia with the world knowing that we are defending ourselves, that we are not neo-colonialists and are not a party or a member of the British troops here, trying to cross into Indonesia, as the Indonesian representatives in the U.N. tried to put it to the world."

"I would like to go back again to the importance I attach to the proposed visit of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew to the African countries and, here I would like to state that I welcome it very much if the Chief Minister of Sabah, or his representative, and the Chief Minister of Sarawak or his representative, would be among the delegation or among the group that is planning to visit the African countries. Further, I hope that this sort of activities by our Government will not stop at the African continent only, but that the Government would send a competent group to the Latin American countries to convince them. We should waste no time to grab any opportunity to bring about an end to their campaign of crushing Malaysia."

"In conclusion, I would like to state that we in Sabah are standing behind the Malaysian Government. I would like to state again that we want no part of Indonesia, we want no part of Soekarno's regime and we do not want to be under Soekarno. I will say this anywhere in the world. I would now like to conclude by saying that I am disappointed to hear that some of our people – in fact representatives of our people here in Malaysia, sitting in the Opposition – are still anti-Malaysia and that, in fact, they are actually not supporting the Malaysian Government. Anyway, I am confident that our Government, the Malaysian Government, will be able to stand on its own feet. God willing, the confrontation policy of Indonesia will disappear tomorrow."

By mid 1964, the political situation was becoming more critical. The incessant personality and petty intra-party conflicts reached its climax when Tun Mustapha suddenly discovered that a constitutional Governor had no powers except to endorse Bills and letters as directed by the Chief Minister. He had expected that as Governor, he would be vested with similar powers enjoyed by his European predecessors.

He felt that he had been deceived by Tun Fuad into accepting the Governor's position. His party, USNO, was the majority party with 14 seats in the Legislative Assembly whereas Tun Fuad's party, UPKO, had only 11 seats. Mustapha wanted to be Chief Minister. Backed by his USNO supporters, Tun Mustapha began to use his only consititutional prerogative. He refused to sign Enactments and appointment letters presented by the Chief Minister as in the State Secretary's case. The Chief Minister had appointed John. B. Dusing but Mustapha preferred Leong Ah Kun. Mustapha exploited the issue to create a constitutional crisis so that Tun Fuad would be replaced. Government machinery could not function if important

matters, financial or otherwise, could not be gazetted. The impasse had to be tackled swiftly.

With the probability of a constitutional crisis hovering over the Sabah government, speedy manoeuvres were conducted to bring the issue to the attention of the Federal Government under the Premiership of Tunku Abdul Rahman. As Prime Minister, the Tunku should have known that in refusing to sign the documents presented by the Chief Minister, Mustapha's action was irregular and unconstitutional. It is unfortunate that the Tunku chose to side Tun Mustapha although he was fully aware that the arrangement, appointing Tun Fuad as Chief Minister and Tun Mustapha as Governor, had been agreed upon by all parties.

Instead of replacing the Governor, the Tunku replaced the Chief Minister who was compelled to resign on the 31st of December 1964. In order to appease his supporters, Tun Fuad was absorbed into the Federal Cabinet and given the Portfolio of Minister of Sabah Affairs and Civil Defence. Peter Lo replaced Tun Fuad as Chief Minister in the interim period until the first direct elections were held.

This feud between the two leaders, Tun Fuad and Tun Mustapha, did not end with the resignation of the Chief Minister, neither was it confined to the two personalities. The problems and intense personal rivalry reveberated right down to the smallest unit. Families were divided; neighbours ceased greeting each other; friends became enemies, and communities were divided along racial lines, each avowing allegiance to either of the two. In the midst of this upheaval, the seeds of racial and religious discord were sown by the manipulations of unscrupulous politicans. Those who knew what was brewing in Sabah feared its consequences. Sabah with its heterogenous ethnic population could ill afford a racial or religious conflagration at such a tender period of its

independence.

There were two incidents during the early years of Malaysia that affected Peter profoundly. It had shaken his convictions and left an indelible mark on his life. He discovered that beneath the superficial claim of sincerity, the leaders of the Federal Government were hungry for power and would do anything, even mutilate the sacred constitution, just to sustain their power.

First was the Separation of Singapore from Malaysia which occured on the 9th of August 1965. The Island State could not be tolerated by certain ultra factions of the ruling Alliance Party in Peninsular Malaysia. As a consequence, the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, *Bapa Malaysia,* was compelled to initiate steps to evict Singapore.

In the following pages are reproductions of two authentic letters that revealed the reasons which consequented in the final separation of the two formerly interdependant states. An action that was precipitated out of emotional compulsion rather than the wit of reason.

Letter from the Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj to the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore and Chairman of the People's Action Party, Dr. Toh Chin Chye.

Telephone No. 4432

Prime Minister
Federation of Malaya,
Kuala Lumpur

My dear Chin Chye

I am writing to tell you that I have given the matter of our break with Singapore my utmost consideration and I find that in the interest of our friendship and the security and peace of Malaysia as a whole there is absolutely no other way out.

If I were strong enough and able to exercise complete control of the situation I might perhaps have delayed action, but I am not, and so while I am able to counsel tolerance and patience I think the amicable settlement of our differences in this way is the only possible way out.

I request you most earnestly to agree.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

(Reply from Dr. Toh Chin Chye to Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj)

Deputy PRIME MINISTER
SINGAPORE

5th August 1965

My dear Tunku,

I thank you for your undated letter which I received yesterday explaining your position and your solution to the present difficulties that have arisen between the Central Government and the Singapore Government. It is indeed sad that in your view our problems can be solved only by asking Singapore to quit Malaysia and this barely two years from the day Malaysia was inaugurated.

My colleagues and I would prefer that Singapore remain in Malaysia and we felt that there could be other solutions to the present impasse. However, as you have indicated that the situation does not lend itself to any other workable settlement and as you have impressed upon me that Singapore remaining in Malaysia will lead to a situation you may not be able to control, we have no alternative but to be resigned to your wish that Singapore leaves the Federation of Malaysia.

I and my colleagues had rejoiced at the reunification of Singapore with Malaya in September, 1963. It has come as a blow to us that the peace and security of Malaysia can only be secured by the expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia. If this is the price for peace in Malaya and Singapore then we must accept it, however agonising our inner feelings may be. Although lasting unification of Singapore and Malaya has not been achieved this time, nevertheless it is my profound belief that future generations will succeed where we have failed.

In order that my friends and political colleagues in the other states of Malaya and particularly those in the Malaysian Solidarity Convention may know my true feelings on this matter I may have at some future date to tell them of the true position.

With kind regards

Yours Sincerely

[Note: Both these letters were hand written but for the sake of easier reading, they have been type-set.]

It was the morning of August 9th 1965; the Separation of Singapore had become a reality. Members of Parliament were summoned to a special session not to debate the merits or demerits of the proposal but to listen to Government leaders justify their actions.

Seated at the V.I.P. gallery at the Parliament Chambers, was Peter Mojuntin. He had come to listen to the "Whys and Wherefore's of Separation". Facing him across the government bench, looking equally annoyed and exasperated, was the Federal Minister of Sabah Affairs, Tun Fuad. There was pain in their hearts because no one in Sabah was consulted before Singapore was evicted from Malaysia, not even the Minister in charge of Sabah Affairs ! There was no justification for belittling Sabah and Sarawak. It appeared that the states in Malaysia were unequal in status a reminiscence of George Orwell's "Animal Farm", where all the animals were supposed to be equal but some animals were "more equal than others".

Peter, like the others that packed the Parliament Chambers that morning, listened attentively as the lone Singapore Representative C.V. Devan Nair, presented the Singapore case. In his speech Devan Nair said: *(Extract)*

"It is difficult to speak without a wrench in the heart. Sorrow there difinitely will be on this day of tragedy, but, in all conscience, it is tragic that two years after the birth of Malaysia we should be listening to funeral orations on Malaysia."

"What has happened today will be quite clear – that Singapore had been ejected from Malaysia. I say "ejected" because I know that Singapore has been put in a situation where it has no choice but to accept an ultimatum presented to it by the Central Government. I know that Singapore does not want to leave Malaysia, because the leaders of

Singapore, of the present Government in Singapore, believe in the unity of Malaysia, of Singapore and Malaya. This has been the basic ideological belief of the leaders of Singapore, right from the time the Party was founded; and I can assure this House that it will continue to be the basic and fundamental belief of the leaders of the Peoples' Action Party. But their belief was founded on the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia, which phrase these days is treated as a dirty word. Singapore is being forced out of Malaysia, not because she was a source of weakness to Malaysia, not because she was inefficient and corrupt, not because she was an advocate for any particular form of communalism – we saved Singapore from communal chauvinism – but because certain Alliance politicans believe Singapore to be the bulwark and the chief source of inspiration for a Malaysian Malaysia. That was the chief, simple, basic reason. In this the Alliance extremists, the opponents of a Malaysian Malaysia, are grievously wrong, and they will discover soon enough that a Malaysian Malaysia is not just a Singapore concept, though admittedly Singapore was one of the chief inspirers and a pillar of strength for the movement. But Alliance extremists should realise, and they will realise, that the movement for a non-communal, tolerant, Malaysian Malaysia has got roots not in the hearts of P.A.P. or of Lee Kuan Yew and company but in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Malaysians in Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. It has vigor and momentum. This concept can be sustained and will be sustained even if, technically, Singapore is booted out of Malaysia. And why ? Because whatever politicians on the Government bench may think, what is left of Malaysia after the excision of Singapore is still a multi-racial society, and the logic of that situation must ultimately lead to the fulfilment of the concept which my colleagues and I in the P.A.P. had advanced, and the fact that Singapore has been ejected, will not mean that the spirit of those of us

who believe in a Malaysian Malaysia has been crushed. The very existence of a multi-racial Singapore still progressing, and still bound to progress, in the spirit not of any narrow communal chauvinism, but of a Malaysian Malaysia, is bound to act as a stimulus to the movement for a Malaysian Malaysia."

"By ejecting Singapore and granting it independence, the ultras of Malaysia have no longer the power, perhaps, to directly intervene to suppress the fulfilment in practice of an ideology based upon a non-communal multi-racial society – the ideal of a noncommunal, tolerant, mutli-racial, democratic society. Today by the ejection of Singpaore, I am the only Representative of the P.A.P. left in this House. Time will show, the future will show, that it is a much greater pity than is realised now. But I am not the only one. I firmly believe and know that there are hundreds of thousands of people in this country, who will subscribe to the ideals and principles which we had sought to advance here. There are others also on the Opposition benches, who are no less passionately concerned than I am, than the hundreds of thousands of the other citizens of this country, about a Malaysian Malaysia. And more important, there is an International opinion, and international opinion is definitely coming to a philosophy where what is encouraged, what is accepted, are larger and larger integrations of peoples, communities, and territories, and what had happened today is a reversal of the tide of history, an attempt to reverse the tide of history: and as King Canute discovered in the legend, it is bound to fail."

"The extremists, the ultras in the Alliance, know the extent of the support which the ideal and the concept of Malaysia Malaysia has: they know that, despite their massive and distorted propaganda against the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia. This concept has already fired the imagination of

people throughout this country and, I repeat, fired the imagination of people of all races and communities. If the Alliance extremists were not so frightened of the power of the Malaysian Malaysia concept to rally the people of Malaysia, they would not have resorted to this desperate strategic measure of ejecting Singapore."

As C.V. Dewan Nair spoke, Tun Fuad was evaluating the wisdom of Sabah's entry into Malaysia. He could still recall the time when he had reservations about joining Malaysia, the time when he wrote his objections to the Malayan Prime Minister and the meeting with Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew who convinced him to accept the Malaysian concept. Now with Separation, he and his colleagues would be back at square one and at the mercy of the Kuala Lumpur government. There would be no buffer state. Sarawak with Chief Minister Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan at the helm could not be of much help, as he too was facing personal problems.

The Parliamentary meeting was over. Both Peter and Tun Fuad were dissatisfied with the explanation of the Federal Ministers. Like the majority in Sabah, they could not accept the rationale that Sabah should have been left out of any prior knowledge preceeding the Separation. They contended that, if in the formation of Malaysia, Sabah was consulted, there was no justification why Sabah should not be consulted when an important component of Malaysia was to be evicted. On returning to Sabah, Peter and Tun Fuad toured the entire state, calling for a review of Sabah's entry status as embodied in the Twenty Points. Many in Sabah favoured the formation of a new Federation, merging the territories of Sabah, Singapore and Sarawak – The Triple S.

The call for a review of Sabah's status brought fear to

the USNO Camp. They were afraid that plans to harvest the timber wealth of the state would evaporate once Sabah succeeded in aligning itself with Singapore and Sarawak. Wild and misleading tales were chanelled to Kuala Lumpur.

Peter and Tun Fuad were accused of propounding the P.A.P. concept of a 'Malaysian Malaysia' where irrespective of race, religion, language, culture or creed, everyone deserves equal treatment because the country does not belong to the Chinese, Malays, Kadazan, Indians or Bajaus; it belongs to all Malaysians.

Repeated warnings by the Federal Government to Tun Fuad and Peter Mojuntin to cease their war-cry for a reassessment of the Malaysian Accord, went unheeded. Instead the momentum for a review of the Twenty Points was reaching the most remote interiors of Sabah.

The fear of Malaysia splintering into separate orbits, emulating the Singapore experience, was sufficient reason for Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, to act swiftly against the move. Besides, the disintegration of Malaysia would only tarnish the reputation of the Prime Minister, much to the satisfaction of his political foes within his own party. The failure of Malaysia could cause the Tunku to lose his premiership.

Leaving him with practically no alternative but to comply with the demands of USNO's resolutions, the Tunku flew into Sabah and on the 13th September 1965, compelled Tun Fuad to tender his resignation as the Minister of Sabah Affairs and Civil Defence.

Left with neither the mantle of Chief Minister nor Federal Minister, Tun Fuad began to tour the land with Peter, criticising the Central Government for the shabby manner in which he had been treated and continued to call

for a review of the Twenty Points, The people rallied behind Tun Fuad and Peter. UPKO branches spread everywhere; they sprang up in USNO strongholds ! In the span of a few months, there were strong indications that if the first direct elections were to be held, USNO would lose half of the seats it had. The support for UPKO was spontaneous and overwhelming. This situation disquicted USNO leaders who began to devise a scheme to crush UPKO.

The action of UPKO, in declaring open branches within USNO areas, was considered a violation of the Sabah Alliance Agreement which prohibited component parties from establishing branches in a Constituency controlled by another. Shouts and threats of expulsion were again the order of the day and the USNO leadership again sought the intervention of the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who demanded the resignation of Tun Fuad as President of UPKO.

Peter Mojuntin resigned as Secretary-General of UPKO in protest against the action of the Malaysian Prime Minister.

According to a member of the UPKO Central Council, Stephen Tibok, Member of Parliament for Penampang, "the resignations of Tun Fuad and Peter were mock resignations to satisfy the Federal Government. But the two continued to lead the party especially Peter, who travelled to the remote interiors to explain to the people the actual situation."

"The SCA and their supporters, after the eviction of Singapore, realised that they had made a great mistake by supporting Tun Mustapha in ousting Tun Fuad as the Chief Minister. They then switched their support from USNO to UPKO. Realising the added advantage, Tun Fuad seized the opportunity to rally for Chinese support."

"That frightened USNO, which had to seek the

assistance of the Federal Ministers. It was not long before Tun Fuad received a letter from Kuala Lumpur, threatening dismissal from the party unless he dismissed all the Chinese supporters from UPKO."

With the resignation of the two principal political personalities of UPKO, there was a temporary lull in the otherwise stormy scene of Sabah politics. However, it did not mean that the zeal and firebrand politics of Peter, though alone and sometimes isolated by his colleauges, had become lukewarm. He never ceased to comment on what he believed was right, unperturbed by its consequences.

During the State Assembly meeting of June 1966, Peter as an Alliance back-bencher, representing the Penampang Constituency, confronted the former Finance Minister, Datuk Harris Salleh over the implementation of rural development projects. He accused the Finance Minister of favouritism and warned that if Ministers could make their own minds on priorities, then there was a danger that they might play politics with government funds.

Peter said: "The Red Book on rural development seems to have been completely ignored by the Ministry of Finance which is apparently responsible for rural development." He said it was interesting to note that the Finance Minister had admitted that a road listed as priority No. 39 was built immediately because of the influence of an Assemblyman.

"One would have thought that a Minister should not be influenced by anybody, even a member of this House. Favouritism should not be practised by any Minister in the Government. Government funds should be spent properly and according to the list of priorities in the Red Book."

"If Ministers make their own decisions as a result of

demands, then we can see a great danger that Ministers may play politics with government money."

Speaking on the government motion, expressing relief and satisfaction over the successful outcome of the Bangkok Talks in pursuit or peace and friendship between Malaysia and Indonesia, Peter said: "This is an opportune time to caution the Malaysian Government that the quarrels between Malaysia and Indonesia have not yet been finally settled because the agreement has not been signed."

"We read in the newspapers that the Indonesian Government is very touchy about matters affecting Eastern Malaysia."

"Whatever the Central Government does in regard to the affairs of Sabah and Sarawak must be done with caution, otherwise peace with Indonesia will not be achieved."

Not only was Peter vocal during the State Assembly meetings, he was equally outspoken when the Assembly was not in session. Whenever and wherever a problem arose he did not fear to contribute his views. His fear was not for his person or family. He feared for his people and his State. Unsure of what was in store for them in the future, when the present was so insecure, he spoke out very strongly against the action of the Alliance Government, not because of his disagreement with them but more important to reflect the thoughts and anxieties of the people of Sabah.

The political situation in Sabah was becoming more complicated and its citizenry more apprehensive. In an article which appeared in the *Straits Times* of 29th June 1966, we are able to grasp the situation that was brought to light by Peter Mojuntin. It was reported as follows : "The argument between the UPKO and the USNO leaders took serious note today with each

accusing the other of undermining the Sabah Alliance. Political observers here believe that the Sabah Alliance National Council will probably take disciplinary action against Mr. Peter Mojuntin who first started the controversy by clashing with the State Finance Minister, in the State Assembly, 11 days ago."

"But Mr. Mojuntin seems undeterred. His latest statement this morning said that every member of the Alliance had a duty to 'expose elements in the Sabah Alliance who only serve to undermine the Alliance for their own ends.' What is more disturbing to the other partners of the Alliance – USNO and Sabah Chinese Association – is Mr. Mojuntin's political visits to Kuching during the week-end. He met some political leaders there but did not disclose the nature of his discussion with them."

"Mr. Mojuntin, a very active UPKO leader, has openly attacked the Alliance Ministers both at State and Federal levels on a number of issues. His recent statement over the removal of Dato Ningkan, as Sarawak Chief Minister, has been severely criticised by both the Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and the Sabah Alliance Chief, Tun Mustapha bin Datuk Harun. Tun Mustapha, who is also the USNO president, accused Mr. Mojuntin of 'putting on the Alliance mask and stabbing the Alliance in the back."

"Mr. Mojuntin, hitting back today, said he was surprised at Tun Mustapha's accusation, when all he did as a representative of the people in the State Assembly was to point out 'irregularities' practised by Inche Harris. He added in a statement: "The Finance Minister admitted that because UPKO controls the Keningau District Council he found it necessary to completely ignore the Keningau Local Development Committee by directly giving $24,500/- to minor projects in Keningau when other projects listed

in the Red Book are still not implemented.

"What is worse, it seems that the Finance Minister of the Sabah Alliance had considered it appropriate to spend $24,500/- of the tax payers money purely on the demand of a certain nominated USNO Councillor in Keningau. As a result, this councillor is taking the opportunity to discredit the elected majority of UPKO councillors in Keningau. "Is this not a clear case of playing politics with tax payers money ?" he asked."

The other equally striking experience that jolted his confidence was the manipulation engineered by the Kuala Lumpur Alliance Government in ousting Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan of Sarawak. In less than three years, the young nation of Malaysia was heading towards disaster. Singapore was expelled from Malaysia in August 1965 and it appeared that a year later, Sarawak under Datuk Stepehn Kalong Ningkan was considered intolerable. The Kuala Lumpur Government amended the Constitution and invoked Emergency powers to oust Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan as the State's Chief Minister on 16th June 1966.

Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan was entangled in a cloak and dagger battle with Taib Mahmud, a young over-ambitious politician, impatient to make his presence felt over a wider audience. Taib Mahmud at the time of writing is the Federal Minister of Primary Industries. Like his counterpart in Sabah, Datuk Ningkan also began to question the wisdom of Sarawak's entry into Malaysia. Those were sensitive issues to the Kuala Lumpur Government, who when fed with fabricated versions of Ningkan's manoeuvres, were quick to react. Ningkan was a thorn in their side and had to be replaced.

Kalong Ningkan was dismissed as Chief Minister, not by a vote of no-confidence in the Legislative Assembly,

but by the Governor on the instruction of the Federal Government. The entire nation viewed the incident with indignation, unable to accept how the Federal Government could resort to such unconstitutional tactics. Datuk Ningkan was convinced that he was an innocent victim of blind justice. He filed a case in the High Court, seeking a declaration, whether the action of the Federal Authorities was ultra vires to the Constitution and also to reinstate him as the Chief Minister of Sarawak.

On 7th September 1966, Chief Justice Harley handed down his judgement. The action of the Federal Government was unconstitutional and Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan was reinstated as Sarawak's Chief Minister. Malaysians everywhere rejoiced at the findings of the High Court. It was a victory for Democracy, a victory for the Constitution and Rule of Law. It was the general feeling, that if in other spheres it was impossible to challenge the Federal authorities the people could seek redress in the Courts.

Those hopes, aspirations and sense of pride in the Rule of Law, evaporated as fast as they had surfaced. A week later, on 15th September 1966, an Emergency was declared in Sarawak, followed by a Special Parliamentary Session on the 19th September to debate the Sarawak problem. The purpose of the meeting was to amend the Sarawak Constitution, giving the Governor powers to convene the *Council Negeri* (Legislative Assembly) and the discretion to dismiss the Chief Minister.

The amendments were passed and on the 23rd September 1966, the *Council Negeri* met. The following day, 24th September 1966, a motion of no confidence in Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan was introduced. The motion was supported by the majority and Datuk Ningkan was once again ousted as Sarawak's Chief Minister. It was another

blow to the voice of dissent and besmirched all that Democracy stood for.

While those deplorable episodes were being unfolded in Sarawak Tun Fuad, who was compelled to resign as Presiden of UPKO, was abroad. Peter Mojuntin and others stayed behind to continue the struggle. They could only gasp in horror and disbelief at what was happening in Sarawak. Peter, because of his close association with Kalong Ningkan and Datuk James Wong, both from the Sarawak National Party (SNAP), made regular trips to Kuching in order to understand the problems. On returning to Sabah, he briefed other members of UPKO.

Commenting on the dismissal of Datuk Ningkan, Peter said that such a happening in a neighbouring state indicated that "we are being forced to accept Malaysia as a unitary state and not a Federation."

"The political tangle in Sarawak was a domestic affair for the Sarawak Alliance which could have been settled in Sarawak. It was worrying that the issue had been settled in Kuala Lumpur. Datuk Ningkan who was elected to office by the people, had been condemned. Everything his accusers say has been taken as the truth."

"This naturally increases our fears and makes me feel there should be a reiteration on the part of the Alliance Government that the Federal system of Government, for which we have opted, is not slowly being whittled away and being replaced by a unitary state where there is absolute control from the centre."

"Any indication that we are on the march towards a unitary state can only make the people feel that they are losing all say in the affairs of their own state."

Early in September, Peter received a letter from Tun Fuad. Below is a photocopy of that letter.

DONALD STEPHENS
THE OLD RESIDENCY
ATKINSON ROAD
JESSELTON
SABAH

Gleneagles Hospital
Third Floor, Room 305
Singapore

3rd September 1966

My dear Peter,

You must have heard by now that I am in Hospital in Singapore. Spent a day in K.L. and saw Razak. I agreed to accept an Ambassadorship provided that there will be peace between USNO and UNKO. Mustapha was not present at our meeting - only me, Tom and Ganie. Tom will have told you what the whole thing is about by now and I hope you are not too unhappy about it all.

Now back to myself in Hospital. As you know I was having trouble with my eye again, so after I got down To Singapore I went to see an eye specialist, one of the best in Singapore. He dedided that I needed a thougough medical check up. I was sent to a another specialist (medical) who did a thorough check up on me and found that my blood pressure is too high and that I have a bad bout of diabetis. So I was rushed to Hos ital. Acute diabetis is dangerous as one may just fall into a comma and never get up again. I have not felt good for a long time now - I think too much worrying has also been a contributory factor to my illness(that is what the doctor said) . The doctor said I have been suffering from too much inside tension.

ANYWAY HERE I am in Hospital and being treated by the best doctors and getting the best service. So do not worry. I think I should be okay again after some weeks, although the fact that I am diabetic would mean no more hiing , no more tinomol and the rest. No more sugar and very little rice and starchy foods for the future too, if I want a future.

You go ahead and prepare for the Congress. I will try and send you my speech, if I cannot be back before the 17th. I still hope to be able to get home for the Congress and to attend , if only to make my speech. Please write to me and tell me how things are. Please give my love to all at UPKO HQ. will write again. I now have to go to the laboratory or some tests.

Love to Nancy and little Donald & your bigself.

Donald

On the same day that Chief Justice Harley delivered his judgement - 7th September 1966, reinstating Dato Stephen Kalong Ningkan as Sarawak's Chief Minister - Peter Mojuntin wrote a reply to Tun Fuad. In it, he listed his innermost feelings, his regrets and his fears. If at that stage of Ningkan's case he had expressed such misgivings, what would he have said, if only the letter had been dated 24th September and not 7th September? Early as it was, this was what Peter said freely and frankly to the man who had introduced politics into his life. Overleaf is a photocopy of the letter Peter wrote to Tun Fuad.

My dear Huguan Lion, 7th Sept, 1966

I thank you for your letter of 3.9.1966. I am happy to have spoken to you through the phone. To hear your voice was an assurance to me that your illness is not too serious and that you are getting well very soon.

I am not very happy with your acceptance of an ambassadorship. But then I am not yet clear on what sort of "peace" there will be between USNO and UPKO. I gather from Thomas Jayaswriya that there is no condition at all to your acceptance of ambassadorship and Ganie's Menteri Muda-ship? Things are not yet clear to me and it is difficult to see the future.

In the meantime, I have no do at all that Mustapha in collaboration will K.L. will continue buying over our leaders to become his USNO's ~~field~~ officers and propagandists. The Adult Education is very much a political organisation.

In Kuching, we have been proved right that the ousting of Ningkan was unconstitutional. You must have heard that Ningkan won the Case.

The most unfortunate part is that we know that Kuala Lumpur engineered the ousting of Ningkan. I am sure you also remember the State Secretary's Case in Sabah. We also read what is going on in the Penang City Council.

It seems very clear to me that KL is ready to sacrifice the sacred Constitution in order to try to burn and forget what they want. To me personally, Singapore and whatever political significance it has to us in Sabah, was used as a bait to trap me in Malaysia. In all fairness to everyone in Malaysia and Singapore, the Borneo Territories and Singapore must together be in or out of Malaysia.

The people are unhappy I am unhappy and confused at the moment. Only last night at Sungai, the people who watched the Information Service shows featuring Malaya and the UMNO, the people "booed" to show their displeasure. Our people's pride and self-respect are constantly hurt. "Are we really independent and self-governing?" I ask myself.

I hope you will be home before the 20th. I am trying my best and still hoping. If you can be home on the 17th or 18th I should feel happier. Very best wishes & love to you & Jamie.

Peter.

Independence brought responsibilities and other public requirements in its wake but the actions of corrupted politicians marred its priorities. And when priorities are mangled and reversed, the general public though compelled to shoulder additional demands, do not end up as the benefactors. Those in power can only remain in power by deploying guile and deception. Lies and half-truths are rammed down the gullets of the electorate, fear is the instrument used to neutralise the opposition and money utilised to win loyalty.

The first direct elections for the Sabah State Legislative Assembly was discussed in every nook and corner, in the dusty urban roads, in the scenic beauty of the interior, from the timber lands to concrete offices. Who would be the victor ? USNO or UPKO ? There were all kinds of specuiation ranging from the election date to Emergency rule in Sabah. Afraid that the politics of fear would be the major weapon of the USNO dominated Alliance Government, Peter sought assurance in the State Assembly against the Internal Security Act (ISA) He asked the Sabah Government to give an assurance that the Internal Security Act would not be used during the State's first direct elections to threaten 'patriotic citizens of Malaysian Sabah'.

Speaking at the State Assembly, in September, 1966, he said:"because of what is happening now in Sarawak, doubts have been created in the minds of the people of Sabah".

"These doubts are aggravated by the existence of the ISA prevailing in Malaysian Sabah.

"Would the Government give some form of assurance that the ISA will not be used as a lever during the elections to threaten patriotic citizens of Malaysian Sabah ? Is the Government in a position to give a firm assurance to clear

the people's doubts that the Government will do everything in its power to ensure that the people will have a free and democratic choice during the coming elections ?"

The assurances were never given. The ISA was used and innocent politicians were thrown into the Kepayan cell, detained indefinitely without trial by the provisions of the Internal Security Act.

The First General Elections

The date for the first direct elections was fast approaching. Since the 16th of September 1963, when Malaysia was declared a new nation, the Sabah State Legislative Assembly had comprised 32 nominated Assemblymen. The coming General Elections would enable the electorate to exercise their rights, as enshrined in the Constitution, to elect their own leaders.

The Sabah Legislative Assembly had been clamouring since 1964 for direct elections to be held before the end of 1965. The request was not entertained because the Election Commission asked for additional time. The Commission needed more time to complete its preparations. Among the reasons advanced by the Elections Commission in postponing the elections, were the legal, physical and geographical hazards entailed in the preparation of a system of popular vote in a State like Sabah. The Election Commission would have to demarcate the Parliamentary and State Constituencies into polling districts and then gazette them before registration of votes could begin.

To overcome the geo-physical aspects of the Elections, helicopters would have to be used to bridge communications and manpower difficulties since the major sectors of Sabah

are undeveloped. The delay was considered necessary especially when considering the problems of dividing the ballot boxes for the 32 consituencies, with a total of 191,000 voters living in remote *kampongs*, an area estimated to be two-thirds the size of Peninsular Malaysia. In the entire State there were only a few hundred miles of road, mostly along the coast. Many of the voters live in isolated up river *kampongs* which take several days to reach by boat from the coast. Other remote hill villages can be reached only by foot along jungle paths and across river fords. In these areas polling would be staggered and would take two to three weeks to complete. There is no problem along the more populous and developed west coast where nearly half of Sabah's population live.

Under these circumstances the official date for the first direct elections was April 1967 – ending the years of speculation and postponement. On this eventful date the electorate in Sabah would be given the franchise to elect leaders of their choice instead of having nominated personalities. The majority party, through the Head of State, would still retain the right to nominate six individuals to the State Assembly. In the forthcoming general elections a total of 32 State Assembly seats would be contested.

The political scene in Sabah during the concluding months of 1966 generated great interest. Political parties were humming with activities, preparing for D-day, the date they knew would either see the liquidation of their parties or the consolidation of their power. The Sabah Alliance comprised the United Pasok-Momogun Kadazan Organisation (UPKO), the United Sabah Organisation (USNO), the Sabah Chinese Association (SCA), and the Sabah Indian Congress (SIC). There were hardly any other creditable political forces in Sabah. It was speculated in early 1966 that new political forces would emerge prior to the elections to contest

the polls. However, what eventually emerged to pose a great threat to the government was the internal friction within the components of the ruling Alliance Party.

The protracted differences and animosity that existed between the two major component parties, the United Pasok-Momogun Kadazan Organisation (UPKO) and the United Sabah National Organsiation (USNO), created serious disputes over the nomination of candidates. A split between the two parties, one that had been narrowly averted since the declaration of Malaysia, now appeared inevitable.

To consolidate the Party's strength, Tun Fuad returned to politics in mid 1966 to lead his party, the United Pasok-Momogun Kadazan Organisation, in preparation for the first direct elections. Peter Mojuntin resumed the duties of Secretary General of UPKO fully aware of the challenges ahead. Peter was given the task of reorganising and reactivating the various UPKO branches for the coming general elections. It was a hazardous burden to organise the groups that had splintered; some members even lost their sense of direction. It was as if he was starting from scratch.

Since the resignations of Tun Fuad and Peter as UPKO's President and Secretary General respectively, the party's machinery and organisational structure had suffered. The lack of dynamism and efficient leadership had resulted in many members being disenchanted with the organsiation to the extent that some had left the party while others chose to be inactive. This task of invigorating them was Peter's responsibility. The entire party had to be overhauled if a sense of seriousness were finally to prevail.

On January 4, 1967, Peter as Secretary General of UPKO received an official memo from his President detailing

a series of instructions for implementation. In the memo Tun Fuad directed Peter to implement specific instructions as outlined in the photocopy. It was the beginning of a long and bitter campaign.

The United Pasok-momogun Kadazan Organization
P. O. Box 643, Tel. No. 4280 & 2209
JESSELTON, SABAH.

4th January, 1967.

MEMO

To: Sec. General,
UPKO,
Jesselton.

From: The President,
UPKO,
Jesselton.

Dear Peter,

Please see that Asst. Sec. General who is also Perm. Secretary carry out these instructions which has been issued verbally in the past but has not been carried out.

(1) Our filing system is bad. ALL letters should be filed. And when a letter is referred to me or any other Party official it should be in a file – where it belongs – and Minute sheets be attached to the inside of the front cover of the file. A proper minute should be written by the official (yourself or Fred Tan etc) on the file before it is forwarded to me (or other party official) to whom reference is made for comments or a decision. Passing of bits of paper is inefficient and untidy.

The United Pasok-momogun Kadazan Organization
P. O. Box 643, Tel. No. 4280 & 2209
JESSELTON, SABAH.

(2) ALL letters received in whatever language from whatever source should be given immediate replies – if a decision is pending, the reply should merely be in the form of an acknowledgement and intimation that action was being taken on matters raised. If letters are mere pledges of support etc but does not require further action, then a reply thanking the sender for the trouble taken in writing to us should be given.

But I repeat – ALL replies should as far as possible be given immediately, preferably on the day the letter is received. No matter how unimportant a letter may appear to be, no matter how humble the position of the sender, if he can take the trouble to write to us, he deserves the courtesy of a reply.

(3) We want a written record of ALL decisions made at all levels and Perm. Sec. should get Divisions to keep proper files and to have all decisions given by division officials to be in writing in the files kept in Divisional Headquarters. This will ensure discipline and proper acceptance of responsibility by officials concerned – no passing of the buck.

(4) ALL F/Os should have thier own files in HQ. in which all letters from them should be kept, all their reports, and excerpts of all references made to them in letters or minutes from branches and divisions.

(5) Letters received by me which are replied by me will be handed over to you for filing – both letters received and my replies. But to teach our members correct procedure and to see that in future all letters, complaints, suggestions etc. are

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channeled through the right channels, I intend to pass letters to you to reply.

(6) We must tighten up the administrative efficiency of the Party. We have been too lax in the past.

(7) Please write to all Divisions and remind them of the need to hold meetings at least once a month. I would like all divisions to hold a meeting as soon as possible to discuss

(i) their requirements which they should try and meet from their own funds as far as possible

(ii) how they intend to Campaign for the Party in their area

(iii) report on UPKO's strength in their area (no bullshit, just the truth)

(iv) what is the reaction generally to decisions approved by the Congress

(v) suggestions as to what can be done to strengthen party unity in their area without harming relations with our Alliance partners

(vi) how they can help to raise funds for the Party as the party needs as much financial help as possible

(vii) how to stop quarrels among party leaders in their area (if any)

(viii) what are the major grouses and causes of dissatisfaction in the division and

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(ix) all matters which they consider important to the party.

It should be stressed to Divisions that in discussions there should be frank and sincere exchange of views and that Minutes recorded and sent to HQ. must be the truth – even if unpallatable. It is not going to help us if divisions claim to be strong and that all is well if in fact things there are pretty sick.

(8) Please also ensure that HQ. staff work regular hours and do not just come and go when they like. I find that more often than not when ringging 4280 I cannot get the people I want.

We have been having a good long sleep – let us all wake up.

Dato Donald Stephens,
PRESIDENT,
UNITED PASOK/MOMOGUN KADAZAN ORGANIZATION.

Various attempts were made at reconciling UPKO and USNO to contest under the Alliance banner but they were fruitless. The leaders of the two opposing parties could not find a workable formula, neither in its manifesto nor in the distribution of seats. Probably they refused to allow themselves the opportunity to seek common solutions. In fighting each other, they hoped perhaps to match their personal skills and release their pent-up feelings.

When the elections arrived, it was obvious that a compromise between UPKO and USNO could not materialise. Left with no other alternative, the two parties agreed to use their separate symbols for the elections. For those that were naive believed that the use of separate Party symbols was the best solution in surmounting the impasse which had long existed between the two parties. They soon realised their folly. Both parties contested each other in a test of strength and supremacy, in a campaign which turned out to be anything but friendly. The battle for the ballot was a battle for survival. USNO had an edge over UPKO because it received material aid, manpower and logistic support from the Federal Government. Furthermore, Tun Mustapha was then the Federal Minister of Sabah Affairs. He had at his disposal the facilities of government helicopters, vehicles and even the prerogative to make donations to any district or individual during the election campaign. As the president of USNO, and a candidate in the elections, his actions were a contravention of the Election's Ordinance but the Federal Authorities looked the other way. In fact many believed he was encouraged by the Federal Government to utilise those facilities.

In one such incident at Kudat, where Peter Mojuntin was campaigning for the UPKO candidate, he saw Tun Mustapha arriving in a government helicopter. He was informed that Tun Mustapha would be giving a donation

to a certain village later in the day. That angered Peter who rushed towards the helicopter the moment it landed and confronted Tun Mustapha. A heated argument followed between the two. *"The Kudat Confrontation"* between Peter and Mustapha did not end in Kudat. It was repeated everywhere the two met. Peter was disgusted, fully aware that as long as the USNO President was permitted to utilise government machinery, UPKO would be at a great disadvantage.

USNO, supported by the ruling Alliance party, was able to seek experienced campaigners from the Peninsular-based United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). UMNO strategists and campaign workers arrived in Sabah with one objective, to defeat UPKO.

Peter Mojuntin, the UPKO candidate for the Moyog Constituency, spent only a few days campaigning in his area. Most of the time he visited the interiors. On one such visit. he travelled four days and four nights, with minimum rest, through Kinabatangan by raft, peddling tediously up river to visit the Rumus villages of the deep interiors. The *Rumus* live in long houses, with as many as 100 families residing in one. Peter did not leave out any village, irrespective of the ordeal. He spoke to the *Native chiefs*, explaining to them about UPKO and its ideals. He knew if he could convince the Native chiefs, he would have no problem convincing the others.

Rallies were held everywhere. Instead of concentrating on relevant socio-economic issues, campaign speakers concentrated on "character assassination". Though attempts to fan racial discord as a political weapon during an election is inevitable in a multi-racial country like Malaysia, it does not mean that it should be condoned. The problem, as it appeared, was not merely confined to those that uttered racial and seditious issues but was aggravated by the double

standards of the government. "Members of the Establishment" were allowed, if not encouraged, to utilise all manner of propaganda, including threats and seditious utterances to consolidate their ground with the motive of recapturing lost areas. As for those who opposed the machinations of despotic and corrupt power, the Government did not hesitate to demonstrate its efficiency by locking them up in specially prepared detention cells or resorting to the provisions of the obnoxious Internal Security Act.

The results were disappointing for UPKO. It fell short of expectations. UPKO could not form the new Government. Except for the Moyog constituency where Peter contested, the results were not altogether encouraging. USNO had won 14 seats, UPKO 12 seats, SCA won 5 seats and one went to an independent candidate. Peter had the distinction of obtaining the largest majority in the elections. He won by a landslide in Moyog. He obtained 6908 votes compared to the USNO candidate who obtained only 2089 votes. As for the successful independent candidate he soon discovered that instead of airing his noble views at the State Legislative Assembly, he would, for the next few years, be talking to the four concrete walls of the *Kapayan* prison !

Though disappointed, Peter was not deterred at having to perform the role of an opposition Assemblyman. During the years when UPKO was a partner in the Government, he was critical of Government policies. There would therefore be no difference in his performance or his convictions. He was also aware that as an opposition Assemblyman his responsibilities would increase ten-fold. He now had an extremely challenging and equally demanding task compared to his former duties as a member of the ruling party. For all that, he was prepared to work and prove to the electorate that their faith in him was well placed. The next elections were five years ahead. He had five years to rebuild his party.

However, contrary to expectations, the USNO Government under the leadership of Tun Mustapha, the new Chief Minister, launched a sustained campaign to lure UPKO members to its fold by offering incentives and positions in the USNO government. The offer was too tempting to refuse. The first victim of USNO courtship was the UPKO Assemblyman for Kiulu, Payar Juman. He was made State Minister of Social Affairs. For UPKO, it was a serious casualty: USNO had only one motive, the destruction of UPKO.

The enticing of UPKO members aggravated the already tense atmosphere generated during the last elections. Though the personality clash between Tun Fuad and Tun Mustapha had long existed, the rivalry appeared to reach its climax during this period. UPKO headquarters criticising the defecting Assemblyman, accused him of being a stooge and a tool for others to exploit. He was challenged to resign from his Assembly seat and recontest the Kiulu constituency on a different platform since he had won the seat under the UPKO banner. Public rallies were organised by UPKO to denounce the defection while USNO followed up with rallies pledging support for Payar Juman. He was accused by UPKO as a traitor, turncoat and an opportunist while USNO praised him for his statesmanship and bravery.

The division between UPKO and USNO grew even wider. The recriminations and denunciations, capitalised by rival local dailies, made reconciliation impossible. Besides being a divisive force which was detrimental to the continued well being of the people, the rivalry was hampering government machinery. It was difficult to obtain absolute loyalty, devotion to work or reliability of performance in the state departments and statutary bodies.

The more enlightened leaders like Tun Fuad and Peter Mojuntin had sufficient foresight to act quickly. They were afraid, not for themselves, but for the people.

In a gesture to end the rivalry and promote a greater sense of unity and integration among the Sabahans, Tun Fuad introduced a formula for peace in Sabah. In November 1967, he proposed that the 'Old Pillars' should go and he named Tun Mustapha bin Datuk Harun (USNO president), Dato Khoo Siak Chiew (President of the Sabah Chinese Association), the State Minister of Communications and himself. He said: "The way I see it, the only formula for lasting and genuine political peace and stability in Sabah is to start again. But if this is to work, the old pillars should go. They should get off the picture completely and allow the younger men in their respective parties to work out a new formula."

He added that his proposal was "a sincere one; to be frank, giving up politics would mean that a big part of Donald Stephens would die, but I am more than willing to do this if the others like myself are also willing to make the same sacrifice in the interest of Sabah."

Tun Fuad's peace formula was immediately rejected by Tun Mustapha. Replying to the proposal Tun Mustapha asked, "Where does he want me to go – Moscow?" He further described the peace formula as stupid, stating that "Donald Stephens did not even stand for the elections. Sabah is my country because I was born and bred here. There is no reason why I should leave."

Tracing back the problems between UPKO and USNO to its origin, we realise how serious the personality clash between Tun Fuad and Tun Mustapha had been. The incidents surrounding the clashes, the motives, the causes and effects are sufficient food for an interesting case study. Someday someone may possibly attempt to compile it.

Their enmity reached an insurmountable state. All attempts to neutralise their discord by interested parties,

including Federal Ministers, were unsuccessful. There were positive indications that UPKO was disintegrating and the state was heading towards a racial confrontation unless drastic measures were expeditiously taken to avert the crisis.

UPKO was now in the oppostion. To the majority, the problem could only be solved if UPKO rejoined the ruling party. But, USNO, by its repeated refusal to respond to UPKO's overtures and the blatant poaching of UPKO's Assemblymen, showed no enthusiasm.

There was fear in UPKO's camp, the fear that unless a solution was soon found, the party would be left with only one or two Assemblymen. It was feared that the majority would opt to join USNO. That would ring the death knell of UPKO.

Tun Fuad eventually proposed that the only way to reduce the mounting tension was to dissolve UPKO. He conjured a two pronged approach to the problem – firstly, the dissolution of UPKO, then the assimilation of its members into USNO. To many in UPKO, this came as a shock. Peter was among the first to oppose. He did not believe that the dissolution of UPKO was the answer. He believed that the fault lay with the individual, not with the party.

Tun Fuad sought the dissolution of UPKO because it was becoming increasingly difficult for him to absorb its entire financial implications. The administrative and organisational cost involved in maintaining a political party are enormous. For a State like Sabah it amounts to millions of dollars. It is made more costly because of the absence of adequate infrastructure and communication facilities. From two confidential letters which Peter sent to Tun Fuad, on the 20th August 1968, and 4th March 1969, we are able to percieve the financial burden shouldered by Tun Fuad during

his leadership of UPKO.

(Extracts of letters dated 20th August 1968 & 4th March 1969)

My dear Huguan Siou,

I have just received your letter dated 15th August 1968 with the $2,000/- cheque for Mr. xxxx. I got your impressive photograph yesterday and it's already in the family album.

I am sorry to hear you were taken ill. Please be more careful of your health. I think you should take it easier now after the hectic politicking the past few years here in Sabah. If anyone deserves some R. & R. I think you have priority.

Sorry but I had to send you the cable because xxxx kept on bothering me. He thought he would be receiving immediate money from you as arranged between you and him. He went ahead with his *kampong* contractor and bought materials which cost very much more than the amount he already received from you (ie. $2,000). The contractor was also chasing him for more materials and he kept on promising him to wait a few days, believing that money would be forthcoming from you though I did not know all this until you telephoned me from Hotel Merlin. Until then, xxxx asked for 3 weeks leave to supervise the building of the house on your land. I understand from him that he was using his own means to build his house. The *kampong* contractor was also under the impression and he therefore kept on chasing xxxx until I gave him the true picture. It seems xxxx had preferred the matter to be strictly between you and him. The poor fellow has suffered embarrassment when the contractor came to know the facts.

xxxx spent all the little money he had and he did in

fact ask me for a loan. Unfortunately, after returning from abroad, I hardly had any money left. As a matter of fact, xxxx had his store mortgaged to allow me an overdraft facility of $10,000/- at the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank. The contractor for my house took 'possession' as from 15th July, 1968 and the Borneo Housing could only allow me a maximum loan of $35,000/-.

I thank you for having sent your donation to the Penampang Church. I am sure the Parish Council will give you their grateful acknowledgement when they receive it.

With our best wishes and love,

Peter J. Mojuntin.
Signed.

14th March 1968.

My dear Huguan Siou,

I have handed over to xxxx the last of the $35,000/- payment. xxxx told me over the phone that the Income Tax Department is chasing after more payment. According to him, there is a possibility that Samudra may be declared bankrupt by the Income Tax Department, in which case all those owing Samudra money shall be sued to pay up their debts. xxxx said he will write to you on the matter.

In my last letter, I asked your opinion on the question of paying monthly allowances to Nabahu's Directors. There is no doubt the Directors are in favour but the question is the amount.

Peter J. Mojuntin.
Signed.

—

(xxxx – names have been omitted to prevent embarrassment)

It was evident that Tun Fuad was meeting the bulk of UPKO's expenses. However, his financing had a double effect. Just as it was a financial diasaster for Tun Fuad, similarly the money was like glue, sealing the mouths of practically all the UPKO leaders especially those that were financially obligated to him. To many of these UPKO leaders, opposition to his views was tantamount to being ungrateful.

The two other possible dangers that many feared could be explosive in UPKO's rivalry with USNO, was the fear of alienation of the Kadazans by the Malay population in Sabah and the growing suspicion of the Kadazans towards the Federal Government. The dissolution was expected to remove the two negative factors.

Amidst those considerations, the rumours were rife during the concluding months of 1967 that UPKO leaders were considering the possibility of dissolving the party. Peter was totally against the idea. He was convinced the entire dicision was wrong since it would only be a temporary remedy. Problems are neither solved by temporary solutions nor can they be swept under the carpet. It is only in being honest with oneself in identifying the root cause and taking realistic and constructive measurers to nullify the explosive factors, can permanent solutions be found.

Peter was prepared to accept the inevitable and lead UPKO, even if the party ended up with only two Assemblymen. He knew the bulk of the party members were behind him. The Kadazan Youth Association threw their solid support behind him and opposed dissolution. During private meetings with Tun Fuad, Peter sought permission to lead UPKO. At that stage, Tun Fuad had been promised an

Ambassadorship by the Federal Government. He was subsequently appointed Malaysia's High Commissioner to Australia and New Zealand.

Tun Fuad could not consent to Peter's request to lead the party because UPKO's dissolution had already been discussed and agreed upon by the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak. This compelled Tun Fuad to force the issue even though he knew the majority of his party members were against the idea. As a convenient explanation, the idea of greater *Bumiputra* unity and the need to share the instruments of power with the USNO government, were judiciously propounded for public consumption.

Finally Peter and the rest relented, not because they agreed with the idea but because of loyalty, gratitude and the great respect they had for their leader whom they called *Huguan Siou*.

On the 10th December 1967, the National Council of the Party comprising 60 members met for six hours to discuss the merits and demerits of dissolution. Among the decisions arrived at the meeting was the agreement to dissolve the party; to direct its 20,000 members to join USNO and also to summon a special Party Congress to endorse the decisions of the National Council. The decisions of the National Council took many by surprise. The majority could not comprehend why an established party like UPKO which had successfully weathered several stormy encounters in the past, should finally consent to surrender especially when it had organised public rallies only a few months ago to condemn the State Assemblyman for Kiulu, the former UPKO Assemblyman, who had joined USNO after being elected on an UPKO ticket. To some it was a sell out, while others praised the incomparable sacrifices made by the UPKO leaders.

It appeared at that time the political situation in Sabah had been transformed by the decision of UPKO to dissolve. It was hoped that the dissolution would create a much better climate for the acceleration of socio-economic development and more rapid progress towards creating a Malaysian consciousness. For those who admired the courage of the UPKO leaders knew that it was difficult for the UPKO leader, Tun Fuad, to disslove the party and to persuade his colleagues in the UPKO National Council that dissolution was the only sensible thing to do.

Tun Mustapha, the USNO leader, when contacted after the UPKO National Meeting of 10th December 1967, refused to comment. He reserved his comments until the United Pasok-Momogun Kadazan Organisation Congress had made a final decision on 28th December 1967. Putting up a false front, he said that he had been informed of the decision to dissolve UPKO by its National Council but it had to be ratified by the Party Congress. It was already known that he was instrumental in getting the Federal government to pressurise Tun Fuad to dissolve UPKO.

The end for the United Pasok-Momogun Kadazan Organisation was imminent. The party that was formed to represent the Kadazan Community of Sabah was coming to an end. A party comprising two Kadazan political parties, the United National Kadazan Organisation led by Tun Fuad and Peter Mojuntin and the Pasok-Momogun Party led by Dato Sundang. Both parties were formed in 1961. They were merged into a single party, the United Pasok-Momogun Kadazan Organisation, in May 1964. The congressional meeting on December 18th 1967, would signal its end.

Eighteen district branches, representing a total of 337 congress members from throughout Sabah, attended its last meeting. There was no unanimity. For several hours the

members argued. The branches from the interiors, primarily those of Tenom and Kuala Penyu districts, were totally opposed to the dissolution. They declared that they would rather die than dissolve the party. Unfortunately for them, Tun Fuad was able to muster majority support. Sixteen out of eighteen district branches agreed to endorse the decision of the 60 - man National Council of December 10th to dissolve the party. They were also required to join the United Sabah National Organisation and be led by its leader Tun Mustapha bin Dato Harun.

To many it was a shame. They had no where to turn to, no party to go to except to form a new one which would entail great cost. What probably was unacceptable to most was the admission that those whom they had been condemning as traitors and corrupt, would soon turn out to be their leaders and allies. That was what they found difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile. Their conscience would not free their minds. It was too humilating for many.

Leaders like Tun Fuad and Peter Mojuntin were able to suppress their feelings or may be because of their political experience, were able to view the problem in a different perspective. But for the majority, who lived in the *kampongs* and the interiors, the wounds were deeper and the frustrations more profound than the leaders chose to admit. They could not believe that UPKO no longer existed.

The only party they had known and loved, where time and sacrifices meant nothing – was no more there for them to identify with. Even today, many of the former leaders admit that dissolution was a serious blunder. It helped to pave the way for a totalitarian state and a reign of terror in Sabah.

Commenting on the dissolution on the last day of the year, 31st December 1967, Tun Fuad said that his decision

to dissolve the 20,000 strong UPKO was the most courageous decision he ever made.

"It may even make me look silly and stupid, but I do not mind. The party must be sacrificed for *Bumiputra* Unity! There is no other reason," he said.

Ten months later, on 21st October 1968, Peter Mojuntin received a letter from an ex-member of UPKO who was then studying in London.

Dear Peter,

With the drastic and certainly alarming dissolution of UPKO, the overwhelming majority of the pro-UPKO overseas students were caught in a combination of illusion, disbelief an most probably agonies too, as no country in the world can be efficiently and effectively run without a powerful opposition party as the latter is required to be the eyes and ears of the electorate.

The opposition doesn't only criticise the general policies and management machinery which it considers inadequate and deficient but also advocates its own policies and methods of running the government if it is returned to power in the next general election. It cheks the powers of the government and forms an alternative government if necessary.

When we think of these, we are so deeply depressed and perturbed."

The Rise Of Authoritarianism

UPKO is History now. A page in the annals of Sabah. Dissolved but not forgotten. The experiences were too traumatic for many to forget. It lived on to haunt the minds of the UPKO leaders including Peter Mojuntin. But for the moment, the UPKO leaders were sincere in their desire to work closely with USNO for the benefit of Sabah and Malaysia.

From 1968 to 1975, USNO was the dominant political force in Sabah and its leader, Tun Mustapaha was 'Kaiser' During the seven years, there were ample incidents to prove that the objectives of UPKO in dissolving itself had misfired. The succeeding pages and chapters will bear testimony to the failure of democracy devoid of an opposition. Crime and iniquities, the flagrant abuses of power and fallacious notions of infallibility became commonplace due to the lack of an effective opposition. It also revealed how gullible the Federal Government was in believing and sustaining a power that relied on racialist and religious sentiments to muster popular support, one which finally grew into a Frankenstein, a grotesque creature beyond the control of its master. In fact, it even attempted to bite the hand of its own master.

Peter, like all other UPKO politicians, had no where

else to go except to comply with the last party congress decision to join USNO. Although UPKO had been legally dissolved there were some quarters in USNO who were still unhappy and afraid that the dissolution was merely a ploy to allow UPKO leaders and cadres to infiltrate USNO and ruin it.

Though UPKO had ceased to exist, the bonds of friendship between the majority of the UPKO leaders were intact, especially between Peter and Tun Fuad. Their actions were often co-ordinated and consultations were either by letter or telephone.

In a letter dated 14th May 1968, Tun Fuad said, "You will know by now that I have been designated for the High Commissioner's job in Australia and New Zealand. I don't know yet when I am to leave, probably another six weeks or so. I think I will first go down by myself and then come back for June and the children."

"I miss you very much indeed but I am sure you will find something for your jaunt; do keep us in touch of your movements."

While maintaining close contact with his former associates, Peter made an honest attempt to work with USNO. He discovered like the rest of his colleagues had discovered, that working with those that he had recently insulted, criticised and condemned, was not easy. But Peter tried, hoping that for the good of Sabah, everyone including USNO leaders would try and forget the past and look with optimism towards the future.

In early 1968 Peter who was a life member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, was offered the opportunity to attend a course on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure in Westminister, London. While attending

the course, he wrote home regularly to most of his colleagues including those in USNO. He hoped by keeping in touch with them, he would be aware of the happenings at home, and also to improve his relationship with the ruling party. At one stage it appeared that he had succedded. His relationship with Tun Mustapha had improved considerably. Below are reproductions of two letters written by Tun Mustapha to Peter while he was in London. It reveals their relationship and the attempt made by Peter to work collectively for the common good.

ref OMO

THE CHIEF MINISTER'S OFFICE,
JESSELTON, Kota Kinabalu,
SABAH,
MALAYSIA

9th May, 1968

My dear Peter,

It was very kind of you to find the time to write to me from London, as I know how heavily engaged you will be on the schedule arranged by the organisers of the Parliamentary course. You may at first tend to view these courses as being too set, heavy and academic for our purposes, but once you get the feel of it, many angles and impretations will strike you as being quite cogent to applying it out here in Sabah. I hope you will enjoy it and all in all prove useful to you.

I'm sorry for your being unable to arrange an appointment to see me. As you know, one of my most difficult tasks now is trying to find the time

to see people who invade my office every day. Some do understand, but many don't that official and security matters sometimes have to take priority over personal problems and pleas for help. I suppose in time people will learn to understand and try to co-operate. At any rate, when you return please contact my Secretary for the courtesy call you have in mind, and I shall be delighted to see you.

As you say, all is quiet on the home front pertaining to our domestic problems, and I think everyone is pulling his weight. The only worry for us is this threat from the Philippines which is still hanging fire, and we cannot afford to rest and take things easily. We are alert and plan to face any emergency.

The English summer is one of the most delightful periods in the unpredictable weather over there, but I think you will enjoy the coming month or so, and you should try to go out into the country which you will find it rather different from ours.

Kindly convey my regards to Mr. Vandenfield and Janice Baffew. With best wishes

Yours sincerely,

Mustapha Kinal

On his return from London, Peter was elected Chairman of the Kota Kinabalu Rural District Council. It was during this period of his life that Peter began to involve himself in social and religious activities. There was nothing much for him to do at the political front, except attending the State Assembly meetings and attending to his constituents needs. The temporary vacuum that existed had to be filled if life were to be meaningful.

Peter knew that he was alone; he could not rely on the directives or guidance of Tun Fuad now that the latter was hundreds of miles away. He had to project himself from the shadow of Tun Fuad. For too long he had been identified with the Tun. He had been accused on many occasions of being the echo and puppet of Tun Fuad, spineless and an opportunist, duplicating every mannerism and manoeuvre of Tun Fuad. On the contrary, his close associates were fully aware that Tun Fuad depended solely on Peter to undertake most of the party's responsibilities. They felt that Peter was used by Tun Fuad. Whatever it was, Tun Fuad was no more around and Peter knew he had to strike out on his own and prove to the critics that his obedience to Tun Fuad was not due to a lack of character but out of loyalty to his leader.

While assuming the reigns of the Kota Kinabalu Rural District Council Peter concentrated his effort on the Kadazan Community. Since UPKO's dissolution, the Kadazans had no representative political organisation. They were splintered and disorganised except for the personal contact and a few social or youth organisations. He knew that if he were to break up with the Establishment, it would be over two factors only viz. the interest of the Kadazans and his religious beliefs. He would never allow the Sabah Government or Tun Mustapha to trample over the Kadazan Community or the religion he professed.

In early September 1968, when there was an exercise to appoint a few Political Secretaries, Peter saw it as an opportunity to use his influence to increase the representation of Kadazans in the USNO-SCA controlled government. He wrote a confidential letter to the Chief Minister Tun Mustapha on the 17th September 1968.

My dear Tun,

I am writing you as a member of our USNO Party, and interested very much to strengthen it by uniting the *Bumiputras* under genuine brotherhood.

You will agree that it takes time and patience to win over former fanatical UPKO members and supporters. If I may suggest, one of the surest ways to win them over is to show that their former UPKO leaders who persuaded them to agree on dissolving UPKO in the best interest of *Bumiputras*, are genuinely accepted under your wise and able leadership. This is especially true in the Moyog area which can only be truly won over through their accepted leaders. I am not exaggerating when I say I know the mood and sentiment of the area which is my Constituency. It is only with this background that I venture to make the following suggestion.

It is important, in my opinion, that Mr. Stephen Tibok be given some responsibility to make him happy. He is active and hard working. Unfortunately he has a family and is quite hard-up. There is no doubt he has some influence among the people. I have good reason to believe that he should be quite happy to work as the Political Secretary to Dato Mohd. Yassin who is friendly with him.

I believe Dato Ganie wants a political secretary who can make drafts i.e. letters, speeches and statements for him. I thought perhaps, that subject to his agreement, Mr. Stephen Koroh should be ideal for him. I think Stephen Koroh

is in a better position to stay most of the time in K.L.

Anyhow, it is entirely up to you to decide. But if Mr. Stephen Tibok is appointed a political Secretary, it will make it easier for me to persuade the big Moyog Constituency to genuinely rally behind USNO. I can assure you I am quite confident of looking after my constituency but if you consider and agree with my suggestion, our USNO party will be greatly benefitted. If it is sugar that will eventually drive away the ants, it is obviously better to prevent the ants coming and save the sugar. (Please do not ask me.....I think I learnt it somewhere !)

I thank you,

Best regards,

Peter J. Mojuntin
(Signed)

On the 30th September 1968, Peter received a reply from the Chief Minister Tun Mustapha, regarding his proposals.

Ref: cmo/HA/62/5

THE CHIEF MINISTER'S OFFICE,
KOTA KINABALU,
SABAH,
MALAYSIA.

30th September, 1968

The Hon. Enche Peter J. Majuntin, ADK.,
c/o P.O. Box 643.
KOTA KINABALU.

APPOINTMENT OF POLITICAL SECRETARIES

Thank you very much for your letter dated 17th September, 1968 on the above subject.

I am truly appreciative on the concern you felt as well as the valuable suggestion made regarding the appointment of Political Secretaries.

I will bear your suggestion in mind together with other proposals in the context of the limited number of Political Secretaries posts available.

With very best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

(TUN DATU HAJI MUSTAPHA BIN DATU HARUN)
CHIEF MINISTER
SABAH.

G.P. 3,000L-666-4-68

Although Datuk Peter was a member of the Government Party, he had not forsaken his old comrades. He often made visits throughout the interior of Sabah and travelled often to Sarawak. He still remembered what had happened to Dato Stephen Kalong Ningkan. Against the better wishes of his new master, he often visited Sarawak and mixed freely with his old comrades in the Sarawak National Party (SNAP). He often wrote to Tun Fuad in Australia, keeping him informed of the latest development.

Printed are reproductions of two interesting letters by Peter regarding his findings in Sarawak.

4th September, 1968.

My dear H. Sion,

Michael Bong flew in from Kuala Lumpur yesterday and flew back to Sarawak early this morning. He asked me to meet him at the *Capitol* last evening.

Michael told me that he had just returned from Kuala Lumpur where Edmund Langgu (SNAP Sec. Gen) and himself were invited to meet with Musa Hitam, Robert Goh, Puthuceary and S. Woodhull about the possibility of SNAP returning to the Alliance.

I gather that the Kuala Lumpur Alliance boys now know for certain that the SUPP and the SNAP are the two strongest and well-organised Party in Sarawak. The SCA and Pesaka are very weak. The votes of non-SUPP supporters could be split between the SNAP and the Sarawak Alliance Parties thereby ensuring the victory of SUPP which is unacceptable to either the Alliance or the SNAP–SUPP being anti-Malaysia and pro-Communist. Whereas, there is a possibility that SNAP may gain majority seats thus the Sarawak Alliance Parties together may not stand any chance.

This is perhaps the reason why Kuala Lumpur has taken the initiative for a meeting with the SNAP boys.

It seems from Michael that Kuala Lumpur is most anxious for SNAP to return to the Alliance. They admitted to Michael and Edmund that Kuala Lumpur made a mistake on Sarawak. To save the face of Kuala Lumpur if and when SNAP agrees to return, Ningkan must not be Chief Minister but another Leader in SNAP possibly Dato James, Charles Linang or Dato Endawie. This is possible because the crisis actually revolved around Ningkan as a personality and not

because SNAP's and Alliances policies differ so much. This means that SNAP would be the dominant partner before the Elections and before the candidates were chosen.

I told Michael that after considering the position of Sarawak within this South East Asia region and realising that Sarawak has no better alternative than to make the best out of Malaysia, this offer by Kuala Lumpur should be seriously considered by SNAP. The advantages to SNAP is that if all goes well, SNAP would not have to risk losing in the elections and save all the problems that goes with campaigning against the desperate Alliance and, somebody in SNAP will save a lot of money.

The only question is for SNAP now to decide when Ningkan is put in his proper place, i.e. either now or after th elections. I gather Ningkan still insists to be re-instated as Chief Minister of Sarawak.

I gather that Hood Teck has told Khai Boh that he was prepared to consider returning to the Alliance but everything now depends on Dato James who apparently has some regard from the Tengku.

If any negotiations are going to be carried out between SNAP and the Alliance, it has to be done within this coming two or three months before the SNAP decides on its Candidates for the Elections. Michael Bong thinks that you are the most likely person to succeed in bringing about a reconciliation. I reckon the SNAP wants somebody they could trust. Michael asked me to ask you whether you could give your views on the matter and perhaps write to him c/o 4A, North Yu Seng Road, P.O.Box 403, Miri, Sarawak, East Malaysia. He is expecting a letter from S. Woodhull from Kuala Lumpur.

Perhaps you have heard by now that Salleh Sulong and

Dato Yassin have been appointed Finance Minister and Minister Coordinator respectively. Our Kadazan people are very disappointed that no former UPKO Assemblyman was appointed.

Tun Mustapha told me after the swearing in ceremony at the Istana that he is trying to get Tengku to agree on creating a 10th Ministry for Sabah to accomodate me. I do not know whether I should accept, if offered a Ministerial post especially if it is a junior Asst. Ministership.

I hope to hear from you.

PJM/lt.

My BEST REGARDS,

Yrs Sincerely,

Peter.

17th Sept., 1978.

My dear H-Son,

I thank you for the lovely Postcard from Kiwilands. Little Don was quite delighted. Your happy pictures during the Malaysia Day Celebration make me feel happy and I am sure a lot of others too.

Last Saturday 14th September, 1968 I saw Tun Mustapha in his Office. He asked me not to have any more contact with the Oppositions to the Alliance because Kuala Lumpur keeps on asking him reports about me. I told him Michael Bong asked me to see him in Kota Kinabalu when he returned from Kuala Lumpur after meeting the Alliance boys. I told him that I advised Michael to take seriously the Alliance offer for a reconciliation. Mustapha advised me that next time I have to meet an Opposition member I should take along one USNO member to be my witness.

He said that he will include me in the Committee to help in the coming elections in Sarawak. I just nodded.

Tun Mustapha again said for the third time that after the Sarawak elections and depending on the results, he is most likely to make me an Assistant Minister in the State. He obviously thinks that the Sallehs, Habibs, Payars, Yassins, and the 3 Chinese Ministers are more able and capable than me in all ways! Let him dangle the carrots in front of me. It may turn out to be that carrots are exactly the nutriants I need for harder times ahead. I was not even sure whether I should say yes to a State Ministership. Junior Ministership under the present arrangement is out for me, I reckon. If the Kadazan are depressed now, they would certainly be insulted and then maybe despise me. But one thing I have already decided, I shall stand for Parliament with or without the Alliance ticket.

Tun Mustapha took pains to tell me to inform the people that he is not pro-Chinese but just pretending! As he put it: "Give ants sugar to kill them"? I don't know. Perhaps he is thinking of gorging me with sweets!

In any case he said that if he were bad and selfish, he would not have helped you and Ganie. I did not ask how.

He told me that he was sure the Chinese Ministers have kept their money in either Hongkong or Formosa. This is illegal, he said and he had the matter under active investigation now. I spoke to Hong Ghee about this.

He also tried hard to convince me he is not a stooge of Kuala Lumpur but that the Alliance will be in power for the next 20 years and it is politically wise to give them full cooperation now. He is afraid of the Chinese shadow in this region and he is therefore always trying to get very close to the British in order to get them to invest in Sabah.

I told him the Kadazans still feel hurt inside and that they cannot be forced to rally behind USNO now. If you did you will only get the opportunists I told him. He agreed with me.

The swan song now are that the *Bumiputras* are united under the wise leadership of Tun Haji Datu Mustapha. I am sure you are reading the papers from here.

Our best regards.

Yours Sincerely

Peter

In a few months after the dissolution of UPKO, its prime mover, Tun Fuad, was having doubts. Although he was hundreds of miles away, he was receiving information concerning the deteriorating situation in Sabah. He wrote to Peter on the 30th September 1968, saying: *"often I weep quietly. There is still a very big ache in my heart but I am sure what we have done was the right thing. We must make Malaysia stick but at the same time plan to make Malaysia the Malaysia we want — time and patience are needed for this."*

In his reply to the letter, Peter said: *"I understand how you feel because often my heart aches and weeps quietly too. It is true that time and a lot of patience are needed to realise the Malaysia all the people want. Leaders must lead and suffer even in victory. Victory is peace and prosperity for the people. I am even surer now that our decision on the UPKO dissolution was right. It is now left to the people and destiny to make out the future."*

Peter was not reflecting his true feelings in that letter; it was a mere reflection of his hopes. He hoped that the aspirations which they had had in dissolving UPKO would materialise, otherwise they would be indicted by History as having made the greatest blunder of their lives. Peter knew that dissolution was a mistake; he had opposed it. In the same letter dated 30th September 1968 to Tun Fuad, he spoke of his moves to reorganise the Kadazan Community into an organised political force. They had been languishing and had to be invigorated. In the letter, he said:—"I have in mind a plan to amalgamate the Kadazan Society and the Kadazan Cultural Association into a Kadazan Welfare and Cultural Society as a State wide body. I also plan to ask as far as possible all Kadazan *Kampongs* to organise their own *Kampong* Welfare and Cultural club with sub-committees like buildings,

health, recreation and games, roads and bridges, condolence, cultural organisation, social welfare, burial ground, education and dispute committees. Kampong Hungab is going to take the lead in this. The club shall be affiliated to the proposed Kadazan Welfare and Cultural Society. This will enable the Kampong folks to actively participate in the general improvements of their kampongs."

He also voiced his frustrations with the USNO administration by adding, "The Kadazans I think, feel that Tun Mustapha prefers to give the Chinese a better deal than the Kadazan *bumiputras.* Could you give him a hint that perhaps he could show more to win over the former UPKO elements to the genuine idea of *Bumiputra-unity.*"

"Tun Mustapha asked me to explain quietly that he does not care much for the Chinese and I am trying my best. Some I met threw me 'glaring proofs' that the Sabah Chief Minister has given favours to the Sabah Chinese Association.

The Sabah Civil Service is getting flooded with Malayans. Like in the case of the Director of Education; first they sent a Malayan Indian, and gradually replaced him with a Malayan Malay. A very clever move."

There Is More Than One Way To Syurga

The year began with Tun Mustapha's re-election as the undisputed overlord of the United Sabah National Organisation. The USNO general assembly of March 1969 unanimously endorsed his Chairmanship. There were no other contestants, none dared challenge him probably because of respect or fear?

Power was at his disposal and he knew it. He also made sure his colleagues in his government, those living in his state and others across the sea in Peninsular Malaysia, knew it. It was a priceless commodity. Some men use power for the common good, others abuse it.

The year 1969 was election year throughout Peninsular Malaysia. In Sabah the elections were confined to the Parliamentary constituencies. As expected, the Sabah Alliance with USNO as the dominant force, captured the entire 16 seats. The independent candidates were either disqualified or ushered into the police station for questioning or detained without trial.

It was a common feature in Sabah politics to discover opposition candidates being disqualified for the filmsiest of reasons. The State Government manipulated the elections.

Kuala Lumpur remained silent. USNO's leaders treated Kuala Lumpur's silence as tacit approval.

This only added fuel to fire and aggravated Peter even more. He was fully conscious that the actions of the USNO government were contrary to the established norms of democracy. It appeared that it was more difficult filling in nomination papers than examination papers. Even before polling began, the opposition was being weeded out.

The nomination papers were mere formalities and more flexibility was needed when deciding the admissibility or rejection of the nomination papers especially in a state like Sabah, where independence had been atained only a few years before and the democratic process was still in its infancy. Like the rest, Peter knew the act to disqualify the nomination papers indiscriminately was not due to a mandatory or legal requirement, but rather a sinister and calculated plot by those who feared that the opposition would open "Pandora's box" and put an end to their unsavoury schemes.

In May 1969, after the national elections, the Federal Government declared a state of Emergency throughout the country because of the recial riots in Kuala Lumpur. The suspension of Parliamentary rule and the confirment of special powers on the Chief Minister, as Chairman of the State Security Council intensified the reign of terror in Sabah. Under the Emergency Powers, Chief Ministers were vested with powers to arrest and detain anyone without reasons. In Sabah these powers were used not only to maintain peace and security of the state but to stifle the voice of dissent.

Peter, frustrated by the injustices that were unfolding before him, decided to concentrate his interest where it was most needed. He began to get more involved in religious

affairs. Peter was a convert at the age of 15 while still at school. He was baptised on Christmas Eve in 1954 by Rev. Fr Heuselmans. He chose the name Peter probably because he was attracted to the personality of Peter the apostle, the Rock of the Catholic Church.

The missionary activities of the Catholic Church in Sabah were coming to an end. Since the early years of the Chartered Company, Christians of various denominations were allowed to preach and convert. Christianity had since then evolved to become one of the major religions in the state. This freedom which the Christians had enjoyed were threatened by leaders who chose to be less tolerant.

In the absence of an opposition, the USNO government's actions were reminiscent of those in the Dark Ages. It was like travelling in a time machine. Missionaries were deported for no other explanation than the government's accusation of their invovlement in local politics. The first expulsion of Catholic Missionaries occured in 1970. Priests, Brothers and Nuns suddenly began receiving letters from the Immigration Authorities informing them that their work permits had expired. In many of these cases, these Christian missionaries possessed valid certificates granting them the right of Permanent Stay. Some had lived in Sabah for more than 40 years. They were all classified "persona non grata" and deported by the USNO regime.

Those who can recollect still remember the case of the parish priest at Papar Catholic Church. Over a slight disagreement with an Assistant District Officer he was issued with deportation orders by the Immigration Authorities.

In another incident, the Parish Priest of the Catholic Church in Renau was suddenly issued with orders to leave Sabah. Catholics of that Parish met their representative, Dato Ghani Gilong, seeking his assistance to nullify the

deportation order. Despite the intervention of Dato Ghani Gilong. the parish priest was compelled to leave Sabah. Then there was the case of the frail 84 year old Carmalite nun who was directed by the Immigration Authorities to take the next flight home although she had lived in Sabah all her adult life. Where was her home? Sabah was the only place she knew and she wished to die in Sabah. Medical reasons saved her from deportation.

There was also an incident at Kuala Penyu where the Parish Priest Fr. Freiricks of St. Peter's Church refused to comply with the directives of the Immigration authorities. He was arrested and removed from his office to the waiting Black Maria. There was immediate unrest among the Catholics of Kuala Penyu. A delegation met Peter. The meeting was held in Penampang and Peter called for restraint, advising them that a precipitate move at this juncture would be against their interest and the interest of the Catholic Church in Sabah as a whole. Several other priests who refused to comply with the dictates of the authorities were similarly removed and locked up in jail, awaiting deportation. There were no less than 8 priests that were jailed at one time or other.

Peter prayed for a way out. He knew that these atrosities against Christianity could not go on indefinitely. He suffered in silence, only his very intimate friends knew the torment that engulfed him. Then came the incident in 1971 when more than 20 religious were deported. Peter decided to make a stand. He advised the next Catholic Priest who received the deportation order not to comply with it and assured the priest of his assistance. Peter became hysterical when he learned that the Bishop had advised the priest to comply with the order, to prevent an escalation of the already strained relationship between the Church and the USNO Government. The priest was equally adamant and

explained to the Bishop that he was advised by Peter not to leave Sabah.

The Bishop realised that his acquiescence with the Immigration directives was contrary to his own convictions. But as Head of the Catholic Hierarchy he had to exercise maximum prudence whenever confronted with this delicate problem. In recent months, the problem had become more acute. The congregations became restless and the clergy annoyed at his policy of non-intervention. On this particular issue,the Bishop relented and asked to see Peter. Herman Luping accompanied Peter.

At that meeting Peter told the Bishop that a stand had to be made. He was prepared to go to jail for that. The Bishop agreed with Peter. The priest informed the Immigration authorities that he could not comply with their demands as he could not reconcile with his conscience if he went. In due course, other religious who received the deportation orders followed suit and refused to leave Sabah. There was a temporary lul before the scourge of persecution resumed in full fury.

No human being, irrespective of his religious background, would remain silent in the face of persecution. Why did the USNO Government initiate the campaign to suppress religious freedom in Sabah? Was it because they realised that those missionaries who had been in Sabah for more than 20 years, were the only ones who were aware of the corruption at high places and were prepared to speak out their minds at Church gatherings and festivals? Or were they evicted because USNO leaders needed something to divert the people's attention from corruption and other failures of the administration? It is a typical manoeuvre of a malevolent and despotic government. The absence of an opposition helped USNO in its high-handed policies.

Unable to withstand the harrasment and agony Peter decided to act against it. He knew by taking a firm stand against USNO he would be alienating himself from the ruling party permanently. Furthermore, he might have to pay a high price for his convictions. However, the devotion to his political and religious principles gave him the encouragement to accept the ultimate sacrifice, to be locked up for an indefinite period. He was prepared to meet this eventuality.

Peter wrote to the Malaysian Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak. *"I am now nearly convinced that we the Kadazan are expected to lose our pride, self-respect, sense of decency, feeling or morality and now, "our belief in God", before being accepted as true citizens of a democratic Malaysian Nation."*

On the 14th of November 1970, in a long letter detailing a total of 32 points he registered his protest to Tun Razak over what was taking place in Sabah under the USNO regime.

Peter J. Mojuntin ADK.
Sabah, Malaysia.
14th November, 1970.

Y.A.B. Tun Abdul Razak,
Prime Minister,
KUALA LUMPUR.

Through:
Y.B. Tun Dr. Ismail bin Abdul Rahman,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs,
KUALA LUMPUR.

Yang Amat Berhurmat Tun,

In view of our Malaysian Constitution, the Rukunegara and the 20 Points Safeguards for Sabah when joining Malaysia on 31st August, 1963, I feel that I would be failing in my duty as an elected representative of the people if I refrained further from writing this letter to responsible Malaysian National leaders.

2. It was with horror and deep dismay that I heard from a very reliable source that top leaders in the ruling regime in Sabah have expressed their convictions that "Sabah can only be ruled with stability if Parliamentary Democracy is NOT practised." Some of the few leaders are convinced that if Parliamentary Democracy is allowed to be preached and practised in Sabah, "there will be chaos reminiscent of the days of piracy along the Sabah coast during the pre-colonial and early days of the British North Borneo Government." These same threats were used about ten years ago against legitimate protesters and nationally loyal political dissidents.

3. Our leaders at National and State level have repeatedly

proclaimed commitment to Parliamentary Democracy and, Malaysia was indeed formed through the process of Parliamentary Democracy. I refuse to believe that such open proclamations are only hoaxes meant to cover up the rotting away of parliamentary democracy and freedom of religion in Sabah.

4. There has been no riot or civic disturbance in Sabah and our leaders have publicly stated that there are no organised communists in Sabah unlike in Sarawak and West Malaysia (Malaya). In spite of these facts and the prevalent peace in Sabah, many innocent Malaysians in Sabah are now suffering in detention camps. Poor, illiterate and insignificant *Ketua Kampongs* and other former UPKO active members and the only Independent Oppostion Legislative Assemblyman from Sandakan, the Hon'ble Mr. Yap Pak Leong, have been jailed under the Internal Security Act and Emergency Rule. These people happen also to be Christians by religion. Everyone knows in Sabah that their only crime, if it is a crime, is voicing their disagreement and displeasures with some top political figures in the Sabah State Government.

5. I am now nearly convinced that we the Kadazan are expected to lose our pride, self-respect, sense of decency, feeling of morality and now "our belief in God", before being accepted as true citizens of a democratic Malaysian Nation. We are being treated now as Second Class *Bumiputras* unless we abandon our Christian religion to become members of United Sabah Islamic Association or USIA.

6. The Protestant Church of Sabah (Basel Mission) missionaries have been expelled from Sabah without any reason. The poor Christians in the Kudat District are now left without the help of dedicated missionaries and the mission dispensaries at Tinangol and other places have

ceased as a result. The people there were relying on them as there is no Government dispensary there for miles. The poor Runggus Kadazans who barely survive from hand to mouth are now left bewildered without the humane guidance and assistance of their fellow humans from other countries in this world. A Catholic Missionary at Tandek Fr. Rooney, an Englisman like many other Christian priests, was expelled without any reason given by the Sabah State Immigration Authority. The poor Christians are special targets for intensive propaganda campaign by USIA's paid workers.

7. Not to mention coersion, threats and lies to intimidate the poor Runggus Kadazans in the Kudat/Bandau/Tandek/Bengkoka area and other *ulu* places in Sabah, a Christian at Kg. Tiga Papan, was 5 times called by an O.C.P.D. to his office to be threatened with imprisonment at Kepayan Jail if he continued to refuse to leave his Christian religion and become a member of USIA. Once his son Patrick Manjil Madalag the President of the Basel Mission in Kudat, went along but he was not allowed to enter the O.C.P.D.'S Office. K.K. Madalag also owns some lands by Native customary rights but titles to the land are not yet issued by the Authority. An USIA active member Enche Matakin told Madalag that if he persisted in refusing to "*masok* USIA" his lands would be taken back by Government and given to some other USIA member,

8. A Haji in Kudat confronts Christian natives and urges them to abandon Christianity and to *masok Islam* in order to become united *('iso pangkanan' or satu piring).* THE USIA CAMPAIGNERS SAY THAT, TO BE TOGETHER IN ONE POLITICAL PARTY IS NOT ENOUGH; EVERY-ONE IN SABAH MUST BELONG TO ONE RELIGION ONLY – THE MOSLEM RELIGION. They tell the Kampong folks that the European missionaries are going to

be sent away from Sabah because they are "blook-sucking white colonialists", etc.

9. At Kg. Lotong, Kudat, a Datu told the people that the Chief Minister had said that by 1972 all Christian missionaries will be gone from Sabah and that no more missionaries will be allowed in by the Sabah State Immigration Authority. According to the Chief Minister, there should be only one religion in Sabah because many religions will make the people quarrel among themselves like the Irish and the Arabs. !

10. Lies are being spread by USIA's active campaigners. One such lie is that Enche Matakin, Assemblyman for Langkon, told illiterate and innocent Runggus Kadazans that Peter Mojuntin and other former UPKO leaders who are Christians had already *masok Islam* and therefore "what are the people waiting for but to follow suit". Basel Mission and S.D.A. Christians are told that if they refuse to join USIA, they would be lucky if their lands are not taken back by Government and distributed to landless Muslims, they will definitely not get approval for their land applications in future. The Government will not look upon them with any favour *(Kasian or timbangan).*

11. I have personally been to Kg. Tagaro in Bandau, Kudat and the Christians there are being bothered and intimidated by USIA's campaigners. The pagans are told that they can keep pigs and hunt wild pigs and they can keep their Kadazan customs and culture but they are only not allowed to *mongondi* (i.e. to practise pagan rites and ceremonies) when they have joined USIA. The poor and illterate people are simple-minded and easily intimidated with threats and false promises.

12. To become a member of USIA one has only to sign or put his thumprint on a USIA form hand somtimes shake

hands with a Haji. If he is a man, he is presented with a songkok and a baju Melayu and a woman receives only a sarong. A few hundreds in the Kudat area and other ulu places in Sabah have reluctantly joined USIA in such simple manners. An illiterate Kadazan in Tandek told me that like many others he was intimidated to join USIA, but he said: *"Nokosuang oh guwas kuku sapi amu oh ginawo"* meaning my body is IN but NOT my heart! The man is still an animist (pagan) at heart.

13. The use of force, threats and lies amongst very poor and illiterate Kadazan has gone so far as forcing Miss Linumonji the daughter of Mr. Maganju of Konibungan, Bengkoka, Kudat to agree to marry a Moslem Datu who already has many wives. The Maganju family had long ago embraced the Christian Faith (Basel Mission or Protestant Church of Sabah) at Kg. Pantai, Konibungan. They have been led to believe that if they refuse to join Islam, it is within the power of the Datu to send them to jail to Kepayan. Konibungan is a very remote place in the northern tip of Borneo Island.

14. The Tinangol and Bengkoka Basel Missions application for a licence to register Christian Marriages has been turned down by the Authority without giving any reason.

15. In the Kudat area and other remote Kampongs in Sabah, the illiterate are told that unless they are converted to Islam, they shall not be given a free share in the Company to exlpoit the 3,000 square miles of timbered land in Sabah. In this connection 3 companies have been formed by unknown shareholders to log or extract timber, to sell the logs in the world market and to be trustees on behalf of Malaysian citizens in Sabah of the age of 21 years and above. The natural resources of Sabah should not and in the best interests of the Nation must not be allowed to be squandered

away by power-mad and money-mad persons and neither should such State resources be used directly or indirectly to finance the expansion of only one religion while other religions are victimised and persecuted.

16. It is widely believed in Kudat and other parts of Sabah that when the majority of Sabah's population has become Muslim, Tun Datu Mustapha bin Datu Harun will declare himself "Sultan of Sabah"! Some USIA campaigners claimed that Tun Mustapha himself told them this privately.

17. Very often a policeman or an O.C.P.D. and a D.O. accompany USIA campaigners to give the impression that the Government is the promoter of USIA. Generally, the people in the Kudat area and other remote places are intimidated and afraid to be jailed at Kepayan for one made-up reason or another without trial. The people are being terrorised.

18. Government servants who are Christians by religion especially those holding executive posts and other influential posts are approached about joining the Moslem religion. Another Government servant who is already Moslem by religion and seeks favour from the Government, usually makes the approach in a friendly and casual manner. Promises of quicker and even double promotions are made. Others are tempted with the assured chance of transfers to other good posts with fatter salaries while other high Government servants or businessmen are promised approval of applications for timbered land. Refusal and, determination to remain loyal and steadfast in one's religion especially the Christian religion, will definitely incur concrete displeasure in the form of victimisation and discrimination in promotions, transfers, and other rightful opportunities for betterment, regardless of meritorious abilities to carry out duties. Some weak ones have accepted the proferred temptations. This has resulted in grumblings and unhappiness amongst Moslem and Christian Government servants.

19. An Education Officer was tempted to leave his Catholic religion to become a Moslem in order to qualify for an appointment as Deputy Director of Education in Sabah. He refused the offer and was promptly transferred to a remote District. In contrast, a junior Malay Supervisor of School who is a Kadazan Catholic succumbed to the proposal and he was promptly promoted to Division I. The promotion is still subject to confirmation most probably because the man's wife and children are still steadfast Catholics. There are quite a few number of unhappy family cases like this all over Sabah.

20. An Ag. District Officer was approached to join Islam in order to get his due confirmation as a full-fledged D.O. He passed all the required examinations and yet he remains Ag. D.O. because he chose to remain a Catholic. The good man is a friend of mine and he told me a Haji who is a Government servant and also known to me, approached him a couple of times.

21. An A.D.O. was approached and sent an USIA form to fill in. His wife and children were very much against changing their religion. The wife told the husband that so long as he remained faithful to one religion of God, in the event he were crippled and blind, she would work to feed him. The husband returned the USIA form. He was given verbal assurance that he stood a very good chance of becoming Curator of Sabah Museum on condition that he became a concert to Islam.

22. Non-Moslem Police Officers have also been approached with similar tactics to tempt and to threaten :– "Non-Moslem .....no chance of promotion." A Catholic teacher was told verbally by the Director of Education that his request for transfer to teach in another Mission School in the interior would only be approved if he became a Moslem!

The teacher was shocked with disbelief and he withdrew his request for transfer.

23. In spite of the fact that many Christian native Government servants are qualified for executive posts, such posts have been kept vacant while efforts as described are in progress to get Christian Government servants to convert to Islam. The vacant posts are being used as "carrots". These are only few examples of the real goings on. As a result, many qualified Government servants have left the Government Service to migrate either to Australia or Canada. Those who remain in Sabah have either started their own business to joined private commercial firms, dealing mostly with timber and mining projects. The P.W.D. is now short of Engineers to the benefit of the Mamut Copper Mining Company.

24. Another side of the story is the indiscriminate expulsion of Christian missionaries through cancellations of their "work-passes" and even Permanent Residence Certificates. To date, there are 17 Catholic priests whose stay in Sabah have been terminated without any reason given. One such priest is an old Englishman by the name of Fr. Quinn who has been doing missionary work among the Kadazan in Sabah for the last 46 years. He pioneered some Catholic missions in Sabah and he speaks Kadazan and Bahasa fluently. He has become just like one of us after 46 years in Sabah. He lost contact with friends and relatives after having been away from England for so long. He is now 70 years old and his only wish is to retire peacefully in Sabah and to die happily in one of the missions in Sabah. He has a Permanent Stay Certificate but he has already been given notice to leave Sabah. For one grown so old in Sabah, serving the religion of God, it is, to put it mildly, inhuman for any Government to mete out such treatment.

25. Basel missionaries and Seventh Day Adventist Pastors

are also being packed off under the cover of the Emergency Rule. It is too open and perhaps impossible to convert Christian priests to the Islamic Faith and therefore the logical answer is to cancel their "work passes" under one pretext or another and as is happening now, under no pretext whatsoever! There is no need to explain the feelings of Christians about these sad happenings for even the good and faithful Moslems in Sabah feel sad.

26. Chinese families and individuals who were due to return to Hong Kong on expiration of their stay in Sabah, at the last moment agree to be converted to Moslem. As a result they do not only get "Permanent Stay" but also automatic qualification to be assured of Malaysia citizenship! It is a well-known fact that quite a number of Chinese businessman thriving on the timber and mineral resources of the State of Sabah have become Muslim for obvious reasons. Nearly all in Sabah know they are religious fakes. A young Catholic teacher, born and bred in Sabah is by law a stateless person. Being assured of Malaysian citizenship and the chance to stay in his land of birth, the poor unhappy soul has reluctantly agreed to embrace Islam. It remains to be seen whether he gets his citizenship as other members of his family are still Catholics. It is almost certain the persons responsible to fulfil the promise will try to get him to persuade other members of his family to abandon their religion. This has happened to some Government servants and also to Native Chiefs and *Ketua Kampongs* in the interiors where promises galore could not all be possibly fulfilled.

I am certain the Islamic religion or any other religion does not condone such ways and means to win over converts. Such tactics defeat the very object of a religion.

27. The underhand tactics being used now to PERSECUTE the Christian religion are self-revealing with regard to

consequence and after-effects. This persecution of the Christian religion will naturally come to the persecution and real sufferings of faithful Christians if the trend is not stopped now. If allowed to go on unchecked, Sabah shall become a haven of squirming humanites where discontent, frustration, corruption, immorality and communism shall thrive. If a religion, meant to acknowledge and to serve Tuan Allah while on earth is used in such ruthless manners to serve ones political ends, what difference is to an aesthetic way of life? I maintain it is worse than communism because it knowingly mocks the Almighty. It is blasphemy condoned by the blindness for power.

28. I am writing this letter with the knowledge that the current happenings in Sabah are definitely contrary to the spirit of Muhibbah (Good-will) and the principles of Rukunegara and also in violation of the Malaysian Constitution and the 20 Points Safeguards for Sabah when joining Malaysia and the National Commitment to a democratic parliamentary system of Government.

29. As an elected Assemblyman and also a Christian by religion, I feel duty bound to convey to you what I have written above. As our National Leader, I know you are a responsible and capable leader. I leave it entirely to you to decide any steps you deem necesscary to be taken.

30. However, please stop this age old persecution of our Chritisan faith and allow our faith to progress within the spirit and principles of the Rukunegara. Our Church representatives had personally appealed to the *Ketua Menteri* Sabah, but he claimed he was helpless in the matter as the Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for the expulsion of Christian priests and that his Government is only carrying out orders from the Home Ministry of the Federal Government. The Chief Minister advised us (I was one of the 3

Representatives) to keep quiet about the whole matter. He warned that the Ministry of Home Affairs had ready-made detention camps for the reformation of foolhardy youngsters who could easily get arrested under the Internal Security Act if they make any form of protest. He assured us he had nothing against the Catholic Church but that he was displeased with the missionary activities of the Basel Mission in Kudat and that he could not help it if other Christian missions suffered.

31. And now, the "State Authority" has written that the application for a "Missionary Work Pass" by our newly consecrated Catholic Bishop of Sabah, the Rev. Mgr. Peter Chung, had been considered and NOT APPROVED. Mgr. Peter Chung is a Malaysian citizen from Sarawak. He is now only given 3 months extension of stay by the State Immigration Authority. Another application by a Catholic missionary to work in Sabah was refused by the State Authority.

32. I consider it disservice to the Nation if the vast silent majority of the population is cowed by such political threats to ones freedom of movement and expression. This letter is not an attempt to be foolhardy neither is it written in a rush but rather a sincere expression of my deep concern, not only as a follower of Christ but more because of my election pledge to serve the best I could for the people. I am an elected representative of the people and I accept the responsibility of serving the people in our avowed parliamentary democratic system of Government.

At this time and under the present circumstances, I feel it is part of my responsible duty to write this letter to you.

I thank you.

Yang Ikhlas,
Signed,
(Peter J. Mojuntin)

PJM/kln.

c.c. Y.A.B. Ketua Menteri Sabah,
Tun Datu Haji Mustapha,
Secretariat,
KOTA KINABALU

Y.B. Tunku Abdul Rahman,
Secretary-General,
Islamic World Congress,
KUALA LUMPUR.

His Grace Mgr. Jean Jadot,
Apostolic Nunciature,
217/1 Sathorn Tai Road,
BANGKOK 12.

His Excellency Tan Sri Donald A. Stephens,
Malaysian High Commissioner,
Canberra, A.C.T.,
AUSTRALIA.

His Excellency Tan Sri Wong Pow Nee,
Malaysian Ambassador to Italy,
ROME,
ITALY.

Y.B. Dato Ghani Gilong,
Minister of Transport,
KUALA LUMPUR.

Right Rev. D. Vendargon,
Bishop of Kuala Lumpur,
Bishop's House,
528, Bukit Nanas,
KUALA LUMPUR.

Peter was approached on many occasions by friends, voters and relatives, seeking his views or blessings on attending conversion ceremonies which were characteristic of the USNO administration.

To them he said:

"If your conscience or the spiritual part of your being bothers you because you have chosen to sacrifice your religion for material and worldly benefits, then of course, the matter if purely between yourself as an individual and the Almighty God, the Creator. Religion is not only for this world but for something beyond and better than this worldly existence. Beyond this, I cannot give any more comment."

The obsession which gripped USNO leaders in their quest to widen their political base through the exploitation of religion, probably had its parallel only during the fanatical era of the Crusades. The method may bave differed but certainly not the blind zeal and parochial view-point. Government Ministers were cajoled; departmental heads and their subordinates pressurised; the public especially those from the interiors were enticed, including Peter. Each time he received an invitation, he would give a curt reply: *"I am not in a position to accept because my religion is Christianity and it would be embarrassing to all concerned if I attended your Islamic Conversion ceremony. Much as I respect all religions I expect others to respect mine."*

Three days after Peter had sent the letter to Tun Razak and the public statement made by the out-going Bishop of Sabah Mgr. James Buis, who had alleged gross religious persecution, Tun Mustapha bin Datuk Harun, the State Chief Minister replied to the allegations, texts of which appeared in all national newspapers on 18th December 1970. He said:

"The allegations cannot remain unanswered. Both

statements by Mr. Mojuntin and Bishop Buis reflected fear on the part of the two men as a result of the fact that many people in Sabah, have for the last one year embraced the Islamic faith in large numbers."

"Bishop Buis was the former Bishop of Sabah and naturally he has strong feelings on this matter."

"Mr. Mojuntin, the Chairman of the Pastoral Council of Churches in Sabah, is also concerned about this matter but, it is indeed regretable that he should have voiced his personal dissatisfaction by making wild accusations in such an unwarranted manner."

"There are a few priests who have been asked to leave the State on security grounds as a result of their involvement in local politics."

"On the other hand, there are many priests and nuns who are still working peacefully throughout the State of Sabah."

"If there is evidence of religious persecution as alleged by these two men then it is only to be expected that these Christians priests will not be in Sabah today."

"Mr. Mojuntin accused the Government of using various methods of intimidation in order to convert the people of Sabah to the Islamic faith."

"The methods used were – a threat of jail, confiscation of land and false statements that Kadazan leaders have already changed their faith."

"These are false and baseless accusations and are certainly in conflict – if not an insult – to the teachings of Islam."

"Surely people like Dato Ghani Gilong, the Federal Minister of Transport, Mr. Johari Majakil, the M.P. for

Beaufort, Mr. Idris Matakim the State Assemblyman from Longkon, Mr. Suffian Karoh, the State Assemblyman for Pensiangan, Mr. Fadzil Wong, the Assemblyman for Kuala Penyu, Mr. Abdul Latif Hawkins, a practising lawyer and Mr. Mohamed Noor Nicholson, a journalist, are capable and intelligent men."

"They cannot be intimidated by any kind of threats. These people have joined the Islamic faith on their free will and at no time was there any force being used to effect conversion."

"There are so many prominent leaders in Sabah who are Christians and who are top-ranking civil servants including the Permanent Secretary to the Chief Minister, Dato Richard Lind, and other permanent Secretaries and heads of departments."

"There are several members of Federal and State Legislatures who are Christians and they are practising their faith without any fear of threats or intimidation."

"The number of churches in the State is itself an evidence of the freedom of religion."

"There are a few priests who have been asked to leave the State and only a dozen were arrested on security grounds, among whom are members of the Islamic faith."

"The allegations that they are being detained because of their Christian faith is totally baseless and without any foundation."

"The only reason I can think of why they have made such a wild statement is the fear that they are not making any progress in converting the people of Sabah to their faith."

"These serious allegations are to bolster their own failure in doing their work which has been indicated by the

fact that the Christian churches have been established for more than 80 years in Sabah and yet the percentage of Christians remain unchanged – that is 16%, if not reduced."

"I deny each and every allegation by these two men. The actions of the Bishop as well as Mr. Mojuntin will create misunderstanding and disruption among the various factions of the *Bumiputra* and is certainly not conducive to the spirit of racial harmony and goodwill in the State."

"For this reason I have restrained my supporters from making any statements of this nature although it is within my knowledge that Mr. Mojuntin and others have been making all sorts of allegations for some time."

"On the 19th December 1970, the late Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, Tun Dr. Ismail, made a public statement on the matter. He said: "The Chief Minister of Sabah, Tun Datuk Haji Mustapha bin Datuk Harun, may consider allowing a 'reasonable number' of foreign Christian missionaries to replace those who have been asked to leave the State."

"However, the Church concerned must prove that church work in the State would be seriously disorganised as a result of the departure of the missionaries. Tun Datuk Mustapha had discussed the matter with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Tun Sri Sheikh Abdullah a few days ago."

"Tun Datuk Mustapha gave the assurance that if the Church concerned could prove to the satisfaction of the State Government that church work in the State of Sabah would be seriously disorganised as a result of the departure of the missionaries concerned, he may strictly on merits, consider allowing a reasonable number of foreign missionaries to fill the vaccum."

"Under the Immigration Act of 1963, certain powers pertaining to immigration matters are retained by the State authorities in the former Borneo States."

"For example, under Section 5 of the Immigration Act, the Controller of Immigration of Sabah or Sarawak will comply with any direction given to him by the State Authority requiring him not to issue a permit or pass to any specified person or class of persons or to do so only for a specific period or on specific terms and conditions."

"The Act also provides that where the Controller takes any action in obedience to the State authority a direction, there is an appeal to the Minister against that action."

"But the Minister shall not allow the appeal without the concurrence of the State Authority."

"During the present Emergency, the powers of the State Authorities under the Immigration Act are being exercised by the respective Chairmen of the State Operations Committees of Sabah and Sarawak."

"In regard to the non-renewal by the State Government of Sabah of work passes of a number of foreign Christian missionaries recently, the Chief Minister had acted in his capacity as Chairman of the State Operations Committee of Sabah."

"In exercising that function under the Immigration Act, however, he acted on police information to the effect that the missionaries concerned were carrying out activities not conducive to racial harmony and unity."

The harassment and victimisation of Christianity by the USNO Government in the early seventies produced a feeling of common concern and responsibility among the Christians in Sabah. Those that had lapsed in their moral beliefs and Christian duties had a reawakening. Many repented and reaffirmed their faith. Christians throughout the state began to be aware that they had to consolidate and organise themselves in accordance with the call by Vatican Council II, for a greater participation of the laity in church affairs. The deportation of missionaries would deprive their children

of religious instruction; there would be no Masses, neither would the sacraments be administered.

The first Parish Council, an organisation to facilitate the laity's participation in church affairs, was formed at St. Michael's Church, Penampang, in 1967: it was not until 1970 that activities were fully organised.

Peter Mojuntin, because of the part he played in reactivating and enlarging the Penampang Centre Parish Council (P.C.P.C.), was unanimously elected its chairman on 3rd October 1970. It was during his chairmanship that the Parish Council Building, costing $400,000.00, was built.

On 13th October 1970, an historic meeting was held in Penampang. It was the inaugural meeting of the Pastoral Council of Sabah (PAX). Present at the meeting were twenty seven Parish Councils, representing over 100,000 Catholics from throughout the state. PAX would co-ordinate all church activities in Sabah and provide concerted action to combat the evil designs of political renegades.

The election of Peter Mojuntin as the chairman of the Pastoral Council of Sabah signalled the faith, hope and trust, the Catholics of Sabah placed in him. It was during his chairmanship of PAX that the Catholic church faced its darkest hour. Through the Pastoral Councils, he fought to safeguard clauses 1, 2 and 3 of Article II of the Malaysian Constitution which guarantees freedom of religion. In doing so, he gave the Catholics of Sabah a sense of pride and unity.

On the 15th November 1970 (the day following his letter to Tun Abdul Razak), in his capacity as the chairman of the Pastoral Church of Sabah, Peter delivered a speech at a reception honouring the newly consecrated Bishop of Sabah, Mgr. Peter Chung. There was no mincing of words. It was an honest appeal to all those that could render assistance to the Christians of Sabah. He said: "YB Mentri Dato Pang, Your Grace Mgr. Jean Jadot, the guest of honour

Your Lordship Mgr. Peter Chung, Your Excellencies, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, leaders of other Christian churches, ladies and gentlemen,

"As the ad hoc Chairman of the Pastoral Council of Sabah, or PAX, and on behalf of the Catholics of Sabah, I congratulate your Lordship Monsignor Peter Chung for having received glorification from God on your memorable consecration as Bishop this morning at the Sacred Heart Church. I am sure the Catholics in Sabah are with me in saying 'Welcome to our beloved Sabah'."

"The Christian Church of God is a huge world-wide organisation comprising thousands of different races and cultures with its early headquarters in the Vatican State in Rome, Italy. The Church organisation is not an easy one to comprehend, with all its trappings of a world-wide body so active in so many ways, in its work of delivering the message of Christ to all mankind and to cultivate the Faith in conditions most often wrought with very many formidable odds. I personally admit that the process of appointing our Bishops by the Vatican Authority is a mystery to me. However, as good followers of Christ, and trusting always in God Almighty, it is not for us to worry unduly about such matters. We trust in the ways of God and his Church on earth and we sincerely thank the Almighty for having given us our first Malaysian Bishop in Sabah in the person of Your Lordship Mgr. Peter Chung."

"The Christians in Sabah at the moment are possessed of mixed feelings. We are happy and joyful to welcome our new Bishop of Sabah to take over from our Bishop Mgr. James Buis when he finally decided to return to Holland. At the same time, we feel very sad and angry because our Christian religion is currently suffering from ruthlessly subtle persecution by persons, our fellow-humans, currently holding influential positions in the State of Sabah."

"Our Malaysian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and other basic human rights to exist in this world. The Malaysian National Ideology or *Rukunegara* includes as one of its important and necessary principles, the freedom to practise one's religion regardless of race of creed. The spirit of *Muhibbah* or Goodwill invokes the very principles of the *Rukunegara* which was born as a result of the recent problems we as a Nation had in Kuala Lumpur. The 20 Points Safeguard for Sabah considered necessary by our Leaders during the immediate pre-Malaysia days, also state that there is no Official State Religion in Sabah."

"I consider it most appropriate now, to voice to the Government that our only wish as Christians in Sabah, is to be left in peace to pursue our own way of acknowledging and serving Tuan Allah, the Almighty. This simple request is legitimate and we Christians, the followers of Christ, have such rights as requested. This is stated clearly and unambiguously in the Law of the Country."

"Christianity is not native to the land of Sabah but neither are the other religions practised in Sabah. If other religions look to other countries for religious inspriation, ecouragement and assistance, there is no valid reason why we Christians should be denied the benefits of having amongst us in Sabah our priests and other missionaries from other countries to stay for as long as we Christians think necessary for the well-being of our Faith in God."

"The actions taken so far to expel our Christian missionaries is against the letter and the spirit of the Constitution and certainly against the principles of Rukunnegara and Muhibbah."

"The Heavenly Paradise or *Syurga* that we all aspire to reach after this wordly existence has many doors leading to the presence of the Creator and eternal existence. I am

sure our Malaysian National leaders were very much aware of this human belief when the Constitution was drawn up and the *Rukunegara* and *Muhibbah* were promulgated. No one religion, professing allegiance to the only one true God Almighty, should claim to have the good fortune of possessing the only key to heaven because the gates to *syurga* are countless. It follows therefore that the principles of the *Rukunegara and Muhibbah* will only be meaningful if the citizens of multi-racial Malaysia honestly respect each other's religious beliefs. In the best national interest, of multi-racial Malaysia, no persecution of any religion in whatever form should be underwritten by our national leaders, or even tolerated regardless of the social, professional or political standing of the persecutors."

"On behalf of the Christians of Sabah, I deem it appropriate now at this stage of Sabah's all round development, to appeal to the finer human instincts of our leaders who are concerned, to stop expelling our priests and other Christian missionaries, and also to allow our Christian mission schools to continue their good work in giving education to Malaysian Youths of any race or creed who choose to attend Government aided mission schools. I am sure it is not mere sentiment that prompts our national leaders to allow West Malaysia and Sarawak to enjoy the very freedom and civil rights that we ask now to be also given us here in Sabah. Missionaries are allowed to enter and practise in West Malaysia and Sarawak for an indefinite period of time. We wish it to be so here in Sabah."

The crowd was petrified. Some were seen straining their heads to see whether any familiar face had recognised them attending the ceremony while others prayed in fear that Peter would not be arrested after the speech. The year 1972 was the peak of religious harrasment in Sabah. Many feared the mid-night caller with a special police warrant,

to detain them with a variety of fabricated accusations. Recalling the incident one priest remarked: "Everyone was silent; none attending dared even to venture a whisper. It was more fear than anything except for the Archbishop of Singapore, Monsignor M. Olcomendy. Monsignor Olcomendy roared with laugher and clapped heartily after Peter ended his speech."

"The other Bishops and Priests, with both hands on their laps, were unmoved and remained silent, fearing the consequences that would befall the PAX chairman, Peter Mojuntin. When Monsignor Olcomendy noticed no one else had joined in the clapping, he grew embarrassed. He stopped, looked around and slowly lowered his hands to rest on his lap, as the others were doing. Peter's speech was the talk of the town and the whole of Sabah."

For the Christian Community, Peter's speech was like a gush of fresh breeze on a hot desert air. There was a fusion of gratification and apprehension. Gratified because for the first tine since 1970, and after a series of religious injustice, someone had publicly denounced the actions of the government; apprehension because of possible reprisals from the government or its agencies against the Christian community for the public utterances of Peter Mojuntin. Nevertheless his speech was welcomed.

The whole of Sabah had expected some measure of relief from the Federal Government after the public exposure of the alleged religious persecution in Sabah. Instead, the Federal Government preferred to remain dumb rather than anger the leaders of a powerful and wealthy State.

The months that followed witnessed the general elections for the Sabah Legislative Assembly and a more important political role for Peter which will be dealt in greater detail in the next chapter. In the 1971 General

Elections, Peter was re-elected unopposed in the Moyog Constituency. He was given the protfolio of Assistant Minister of Industrial Development and was made a member of USNO's Supreme Council.

The years dragged on; the political fortunes and aspirations of Peter became bright but the allegations against religious prejudices continued. He was torn between conflicting considerations; to protest against the continued religious harrasment would mean to jeopardize his position as an Assistant Minister with a promising future. On the contrary, to remain blind to the situation would make him a religious fake. He could not live with this conscience.

As an Assistant Minister, he did not repeat his performances of 1970. Instead of making public statements, he wrote to the State Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha. He hoped that the long outstanding spectre of religious persecution against Christians in Sabah would be settled amicably through diplomatic negotiations. On the 29th March 1972, in his capacity as Assistant Minister, he wrote a letter to Tun Mustapha.

Kementerian Pembangunan
Perusahaan
(Ministry of Industrial
Development)
Kota Kinabalu
Sabah, Malaysia.
29th. March, 1972.

YAB Tun Datu Hji Mustapha bin Datu Harun,
Ketua Menteri Sabah,
Secretariat,
KOTA KINABALU.

Yang Amat Berhormat Tun,

THE CASE OF THE VERY UNHAPPY CHRISTIANS
and other
NON-MOSLEM BUMIPUTRA IN SABAH
(The Political Implications)

(1) I remember your goodself saying to me in your Residence that you could not give me your word to guarantee that Christian priests (foreign Missionaries) in Sabah are not going to be systematically sent out from Sabah, Malaysia. The reason you gave to me was that the termination of workpasses and permanent stays of priests in Sabah was the decision of the leaders in Kuala Lumpur. In other words, I understood it to be the policy of the Federal Goverment.

(2) I mentioned to you about this matter inside the

Caribau aeroplane on our way to Kudat and, you were kind enough to ask me to write to you about it and to give you my suggestions or views about the matter. It is because of this and also the understanding between us to be open and frank, that I am writing now on the above-mentioned subject.

(3) It is agreed that Sabah must have political stability in order that the Government can concentrate in carrying out its policy of trying to restructure society with the hope of achieving harmony amongst the people and economic progress.

(4) To achieve political stability it is agreed that it is only possible when the *bumiputras* in Sabah are truly politically united with their popular consent or support.

(5) It is also a fact that Malaysian citizens who benefit more and really need the political stability in order to get the chance of making progress economically and socially are the *bumiputras* in Sabah. It is also the stated policy that the *non-bumiputra* citizens do not necessarily have to suffer because of the efforts made to restructure society.

(6) However, the fact now in Sabah is that all Christians (of different denominations) and also the non-Moslems are very unhappy. They feel, (in spite of the constitutional guarantee on religions freedom when Malaysia was formed in 1963 and also the statements of assurances, made many times in the newspapers and radio) that there is in reality religious discrimination against their Faith and Churches.

(7) To these Sabah citizens of Malaysia, the formation of the Sabah State Department of Islamic Council, although technically not against the Malaysian Constitution, is in spirit and practice only favouring the Sabah citizens of Malaysia whose religion is Islam. The Sabah citizens, those

who are non-Moslems are not given any equal favour but instead they are made to suffer spiritually. (they are made to feel unhappy).

(8) Like the Moslems, they also believe in God or Allah or the Creator. With their own free-will and belief they adopt their own respective religions in order to serve and to glority the Creator or Allah. However, they are not even allowed the peace and freedom to worship Allah in their own way and beliefs because they are now being deprived of their priests.

(9) The Christians cannot FULLY carry out their worship of Allah in Church (Holy Mass or *Sambayang)* WITHOUT AN ORDAINED PRIEST. In any country in the world, all Christian priests HAVE TO STUDY FOR NINE YEARS before they are finally MADE PRIESTS if they pass their studies and voluntarily AGREE to become priests.

(10) In Sabah, very few local priests serve among the approximately 150,000 Christians and it is necessary to depend on foreign or expatriate priests to look after the SPIRITUAL WELFARE of thousands of Christians. The ordinary Christian believers who are Sabah citizens of Malaysia CANNOT BE BLAMED or PENALISED religiously or politically just because they do not have enough of their own locally born priests, yet. It is wrong to do such things to the people who belief in God or Allah.

(11) Christianity or the Christian Religion, like the Religion of Islam is an international religion. Allah is the Creater of the World and He created all peoples in this World. If it was Allah's WILL that all men and women MUST BELONG to only one religion, then there is no problem. But God the Almighty gave man beliefs or choice. In the matter of religion Allah or God does not FORCE

man to choose his religion; He does not threaten or make a man suffer (feel unhappy) because the man believes in one religion and not in another religion.

Surely, no man should do what Allah or the Creater refused to do Himself. Only the non-believer in God or the communist refuses to respect and to honour Allah in this particular matter.

(12) Personally I have read and understood the Malaysian Constitution and the *Rukunegara* regarding the question of religion in Malaysia and I have no doubt what is meant by "Belief in God" and "Respect for all religions". Suppressing the Christian religion (i.e. getting rid of its priests) means showing no respect for Christianity i.e. no respect for Christ.

(13) MOSLEMS and CHRISTIANS believe in ONE GOD. The communists do not believe in God. The communists would like to make the Christians and Moslems fight against each other. When the Muslims and Christians are weakened after quarreling and frighting, the communists come to defeat and rule both the Moslems and Christians.

Why should they fight when it is the communists who will win in the end ? Is it not better for them to respect each other and live in peace as God wants them to ? The Moslems teaching says "NO FORCING" and "NO VIOLENCE". The Christian teaching says : "Love your Neighbour as you love yourself" i.e. "do not force others" and "do not cause violence to others."

(14) In Sabah, the Muslims are not a majority and neither are the Christians. The non-Moslems and non-Christians are also not the majority. However, the majority are the

natives or bumiputras joined or united together.

(15) It is religiously wrong to use force, coercion or discrimination of any kind to make the Sabah people to either become Moslems or Christians. The people should use their own free-will either to become Christians of Moslems only then they are sincere to themselves and to Allah. God knows everything, every secret thoughts of man and it is useless trying to hide this fact from Him.

(16) According to my calculation and experience among the peoples of Sabah, it is impossible to make them ALL adopt one religion even by force. History has definitely shown that it cannot be done with any good result or consequence – only because such action receives no blessing from the Creator. A man who is forced by circumstances to adopt a religion is not a sincere believer, he is false to his religion, whatever the religion be.

(17) In Sabah, to attempt or to try to do this is a SURE POLITICAL SUICIDE. It is definitely a WRONG POLITICAL MANOEUVRE. The following are my reasons:

(i) There is no serious organised Opposition Party in Sabah. It can be safely said that on the first glance the natives or *bumiputras* are politically united in one Party. In actual fact, because of the many *bumiputras* communities with their own traditions and customs, the apparent political unity is not yet fully realized. There is still doubts, fears and suspicion.

(ii) To discriminate against certain sections of the bumiputras or to make them feel rightfully unhappy means that the ruling Party is unknowlingly creating or encouraging a SOLID BASE for an opposition political party to come up in the near

future. The very disappointed and unhappy sections of *bumiputras* may keep quiet but their silence might mean that they have completely lost confidence is USNO to give them justice and fairness. When this happens, no amount of words and persuasions will convince them to support the USNO or Alliance Party. On the other hand, a newly formed Party would not have to work very hard to gain supporters because the voters would be themselves looking forward to join such a Party. The only alternative the ruling Alliance Party has is to declare an emergency or rule an election invalid like it was done in Bangla Desh (formerly East Pakistan). Then there is definitely no political stability and the communists shall subvert by violence after winning the sympathy of the unhappy people. The ruling Government rule by emergency powers but such rule only last short while as proved by history.

(iii) There are thousands of Chinese in Sabah who are Christians and there are thousands more Christians who are *bumiputras* . It would not be very hard to imagine that if a large section of the natives is unhappy for the same reason as a large section of the Chinese in Sabah is unhappy, they could in their common disappointment and misery form into a resistance group which could give birth to a new Opposition Party. The *Bumiputra in Sabah* would be divided then.

(iv) The youths of Sabah, especially those who study abroad in Colleges, Universities and abroad would find it difficult if not impossible to support such a policy. Secondary school-leavers in Sabah will also find it heartaching to accept such a policy, of

religious favours and discriminations in their own country where they understand by the Constitution and the *Rukunegara* that complete religious freedom is guaranteed. They would not seek to amend the Constitution but seek to replace the leaders.

(v) The youths of Sabah, especially those who cannot get jobs in the Government Service would put the blame on religious discrimination. Those who are working in Government but one way or another cannot get promotions will also blame the leaders for practising religious discrimination against them. The jobless *bumiputra* boys and girls, who passed Form V and see that the SANYA members and Moslem youths who only passed Form III get the same jobs they applied for, will first be disappointed, angry and then blame the ruling Party leaders for unfairness and blatant discriminations against people like them.

(iv) All this leads to disunity and maybe even racial and religious conflicts among the *bumiputras* in Sabah who have no other place in the world to go to but their own kampongs.

(vii) IN SHORT, such a religious policy of depriving the Christian *bumiputras* of their priests and nuns IS IN FACT trying to disunite the *bumiputras* in Sabah; it is like forcing these unhappy natives and some Chinese to group together to form a political party in order to protect their rights under the Malaysian Constitution !.

The USNO wants *bumiputra* unity BUT, this policy of intentionally making the 150,000 odd non-Moslem *bumiputras* disappointed and unhappy

IS SURELY TRYING TO CREATE DISTRUST and DIS-UNITY AMONG the majority of the peoples in Sabah. I have reasons to suspect that the thousands of non-Moslems and non-Christians in Sabah, sympathise with the spritual unhappiness suffered by the Christians – their fellow citizens in Sabah.

(17)

(viii) (a) The foreign priests and missionaries do not influence the Christians regarding politics. With my personal experience ever since politics started in Sabah no foreign missionary has attempted to change my political thinking. They have no reason to. They are priests of God.

(b) If the reason behind the sending away of all foreign priests in Sabah is to deprive the Christians (believers in ONE GOD) of their spiritual guidance etc. , so that it is hoped to be easier to persuade the Sabah citizens of Malaysia to adopt only one Islamic religion then I am convinced that such a move or tactic is both wrong politically and in the eyes of Allah (God).

(c) Religion in Communist China and Russia is still practised secretly. The Malaysian Government is not a Communist Government but if it were to adopt the Communist tactic of SUPPRESSING religions (other than Islam) then, I am afraid, the Christians persecuted for centuries will continue to worship God in the Christian way.

(d) Since, there would be no longer any foreign priests to be sent away, what till be done to the local priests and layman Christian leaders who will have to look after their own churches ? Detaining

them in jails would only create further political tensions and possible religious and racial animosities which our Party USNO is trying to avoid.

(18) The above is my considered understanding of the situation now prevailing in Sabah. This is a frankly sincere expression of my experience and observations. I trust, Tun understand that I have to be frank because I believe it is in the interest of Bumiputra unity, in the interest of Sabah and in the interest of the future well-being of Malaysia that I have to bring out the situation as it is.

(19) I hope, YAB Tun also understand and see the dangerous trend. You may be able to convince Kuala Lumpur that if Sabah were to remain politically stable for a long time to come, it is necessary now to review the attitudes towards the non-Muslim natives in Sabah.

(20) I suggest that the State Government review seriously and urgent the systematic termination of Missionaires work-passes. For a Church *(tempat sambayang)* of my Christian religion at least one priest must be resident to look after the spiritual need of the Christians who belong to that one Parish or Church. It takes years before the foreign priests are finally replaced by local born priests.

(21) The priests are essentially teaching and showing the people to live in peace with one another and to serve God. It is also the duty of missionaries all over the world to advise, and to help poor and backward people on how to improve themselves. They do not involve in any local politics. If any priest in the Catholic Mission does involve in politics disciplinary actions is taken against him. Priests are anti-communists. Is it wise to get rid of Christians so that the Moslems shall alone face the communists in Malaysia?

(22) For Sabah to enjoy peace and harmony, the people must learn to become proud Malaysian citizens. This is possible when they respect each other and also learn to respect other's customs (traditions) and beliefs (religions).

Sekian, terima kaseh.

Saya yang ikhlas,

Signed
PETER. J. MOJUNTIN,
Ahli Undangan Negeri Samah
(Moyog Pembantu Menteri)

29th March, 1972.
PENAMPANG.

There was no turning back after that letter. Peter knew that as long as USNO was the Government, there would be no change in the idiosyncracies of its leaders who had become power drunk. The religious persecution continued unabated. No one outside Sabah could grasp the degree of mental anguish and fear that was harboured in the hearts and minds of the Christians there. Christians in the other States of Malaysia were aghast over what was happening to their fellow Christians in Sabah. There was hardly any collective representation made to the Malaysian Government except to seek clarification over certain allegations. Each time those clarifications were sought, the Malaysian Ministers evaded the issue by stating that Immigration was the jurisdiction of the State Government and therefore they could only advise but not interfere.

Any person with some intelligence knows that those comments were mere excuses of the weaklings in the West Malaysian hierachy. Some accepted the explanations; others, though not convinced, preferred to remain silent or 'prudent' and let the law take its course. How gullible can some people be ? Was it gullibility or fear ? Only their conscience can answer. A priest in Sabah made this remark: "There is a very close distinction between prudence and cowardice. Many would prefer to hide behind the cloak of prudence in place of cowardice."

However there were a few who travelled from Sabah to Peninsular Malaysia in order to deliver letters to individuals who in their opinion should know what was occuring there. They did not trust the postal services in Sabah for fear that the arms of the USNO Government would sift out their letters. I had the pleasure of meeting one of such couriers who handed me copies of the letters including the one Peter sent to Tun Razak in 1970.

As a consequence of this information filtering in from

Sabah, Mr. Fan Yew Teng, the DAP member of Parliament for Kampar, issued a lengthy press statement on the 21st December 1972 in Kuala Lumpur, inquiring about the conditions of Christians in Sabah. In the statement, Mr. Fan said:

Democratic Action Party
MALAYSIA

Press Statement **21. 12. 72**

Allegations of Religious Persecution in Sabah: Questions for the Sabah Government

Despite the denials by the Sabah authorities about religious persecution in the State against the Catholics, fears and suspicions are far from allayed.

The whole question of allegations of religious persecution against the Catholics must be viewed from the larger and proper perspective of the expulsions of Catholic priests, the serving of expulsion orders to some of the remaining priests, the question of whether priests from West Malaysia and Sarawak would be allowed into Sabah to carry out their missionary duties there, rather than being centred on the issue of whether Bishop Chung was ever detained by the Sabah authorities.

It is gratifying that the State authorities have denied ever arresting and detaining Bishop Chung, though there were quite genuine fears and anxiety about the safety of his person and his whereabouts right up to last Sunday. It will

definitely be more re-assuring for the Catholics in Sabah in particular, and those in other parts of Malaysia in general, if Bishop Chung – wherever he may be now – be requested and allowed to publicly state that he is well and that he was never harrassed, intimidated, arrested or detained by the Sabah Government.

Notwithstanding the position of Bishop Chung, many important questions still remain with regard to the position of religious freedom vis-a-vis the attitude of the Sabah Government on the practice and propagation of the Catholic faith in Sabah – questions which continue to give cause for unhappiness, uneasiness and apprehensions and doubts and anxiety for both leaders and followers of the faith in this part of Southeast Asia.

The Sabah Government should perhaps do well to allay their fears and suspicions and reassure them of religious freedom as enshrined in the Malaysian Constitution and the Rukunegara by giving positive answers to the following questions.–

(1) Does the Sabah Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha, still believe and insist that unity in the State can only be achieved if there is only one religion – Islam, and if so how does he propose to bring such a situation about ?

(2) Is it not true that Tun Mustapha has said several times – the last time being reported in the Sabah Times of December 3, 1972 – that Sabah is too small a place to have more than one religion, and if so could he clarify his statement/s ?

(3) How many more Catholic priests in Sabah have been served with notices to leave Sabah shortly ?

(4) How many of the remaining priests will have

their passes renewed ?

(5) Will Catholic priests who are Malaysian citizens from West Malaysia and Sarawak be allowed to work in Sabah without let or hindrance or harrassment and intimidation ?

(6) Does the State Government agree with the view of the Catholic Church that the "distressful situation which has existed in Sabah among our fellow Christians had deteriorated" ?

(7) Does the Sabah Government agree with the view that thousands of Sabah Catholics "are now left without a shepherd and a feeling bordering on despair and of unrest, especially among the young, is beginning to foment"?

(8) Is it not true that the priests who were recently arrested, detained and expelled were told that "if they leave the State voluntarily they can leave honourably; but if they refuse they will be put in sacks and deported ignominiously"?

(9) Is the Sabah Government aware that the leaders of the Catholic Church in Malaysia have expressed that the future for thousands of Catholics in Sabah "is most heart-rending", because, according to them, "This coming Christmas, there will be thousands of people who will not hear Holy Mass, who will not hear Christ's words of peace spoken to them from the altar, who will not be able to receive the sacraments", and if so, to state whether this is in fact going to be the true position ?

(10) Is the Sabah Government aware that leaders of the Catholic Church have expressed apprehension and anxiety over the plight of the 90,000 Catholics in Sabah with direct regard to the problem of who

would baptize their children, who would give them feligious education, who would bless their marriages, who would give them their last sacraments, and who would bury their dead, and if so, what has the Sabah Government done or will do to allay such legitimate fears, doubts, apprehensions and unhappiness and uneasiness ?

(11) If there is no religious persecution and harrassment in Sabah as claimed by the Sabah authorities, then can they explain why there was the need by leaders of the Catholic Church in Malaysia to call on their followers and believers all over Malaysia" in every church in every home, and above all in every heart, special prayers" to be offered this Christmas "that peace may be restored to our Christian brethren in Sabah"?

I call on the Sabah Government under Tun Mustapha to give a solemn and categorical public declaration of assurance that the Catholics in Sabah will be permitted to exercise their right to profess and practise as well as propagate their religion in accordance with Clauses 1, 2 and 3 of Article 11 of the Malaysia Constitution which guarantees freedom of religion.

Fan Yew Teng
Member of Parliament for Kampar

Issued in Kuala Lumpur.

I have taken the liberty of reproducing these letters with the expectation that the allegations in it will never ever be repeated on the sacred soil of Sabah. Unless the public are made aware of those incidents it would not be long before a duplication of the incidents we fear, would reappear in a different form or shape, profiting from its past experiences, in a more deceptive manner, to haunt the lives of innocent men once again.

In 1975, as if to reassure the Christian community of his unflinching support in the struggle for religious freedom, Peter wrote these inspiring words in the *'Catholic Sabah'*.

"As we all know the classic example of a denial of our Lord was that of our first Pope. At that time the Apostle Simon Peter, like the other followers of Christ, was shocked and terrified because his Master, the Christ, was arrested, tried under false charges and then tortured horribly. He was afraid that the same fate might befall him. He was afraid of being arrested, tortured, put into jail and may be even murdered by crucifixion! And so he denied that he knew Christ as his friend and Master. Peter repented sincerely almost immediately. This repentence, after his denial must have been forseen by the Son of God, otherwise how could he have chosen the Apostle Peter in the first place as the first head of his church on earth ?"

"At the present time, around us and in other parts of the world there are many persons who have acknowledged Christ as the Saviour of mankind by professing to be Christians in the eyes of their friends and neighbours and yet are knowingly denying our Lord – turning their backs on Christ the Redeemer."

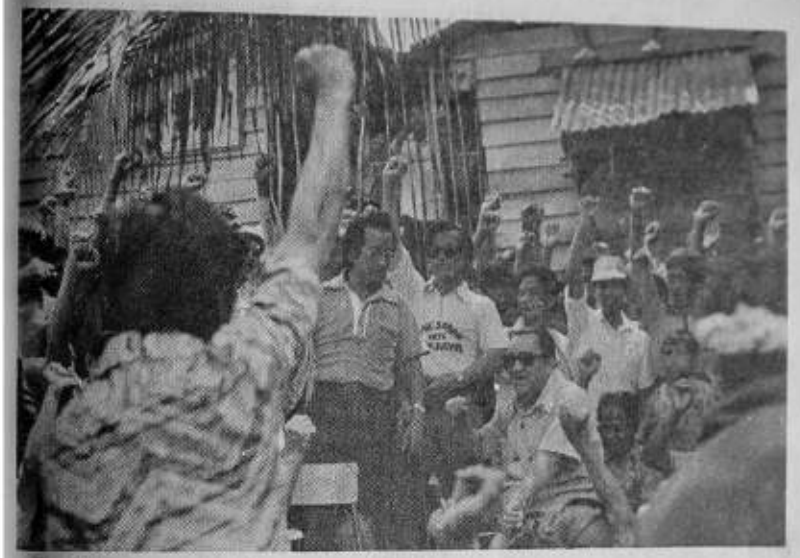
"I have no doubt that some pretend not to know Christ, because like the Apostle Peter, they are afraid to suffer pain, humiliation and even death, as if there is a guarantee that

death will not come inevitably."

"But I am afraid that many of the transparent pretenders turn their backs on the Saviour whom they previously acknowledged, for the sake of purely material considerations. Some are afraid of losing their jobs or business opportunities (they have too great a love for temporal comforts and wealth) and others either seek so-called positions and riches or are afraid to lose their *'pangkats'* and easy way of life. Such human behaviour is as old as mankind itself."

"Will men and women ever learn, during the very limited time at their disposal, to live as a world community on this fair planet of ours? Can they not realise, that there must be a better way for all to live without power-craze, power-abuse, tyranny and wars ruling their lives ? I wonder whether man will ever learn to create a near-paradise for himself on earth or will he, in his FALSE PRIDE and foolishness, rush headlong to spiritual disaster and perish through his own hands ?"

"An answer may be found in our Saviour's own words, that one reason why he came on earth was in order to heal the sick i.e. to teach us sinners how to win back the love of God toward us. I imagine, that if the Apostle Peter, one of the chosen disciples of Christ, showed that the could fall "sick" near the Roman fires at the walls of Jerusalem, we, the followers of Christ in this 20th century, can easily fall very "sick" indeed. Let us hope and pray, that like the first Pope, nearly two thousand years ago, we may have the courage and strength to conquer our own self-inflicted illness and rise again, as he did, to become the steadfast friend of Christ, the Saviour of Mankind."

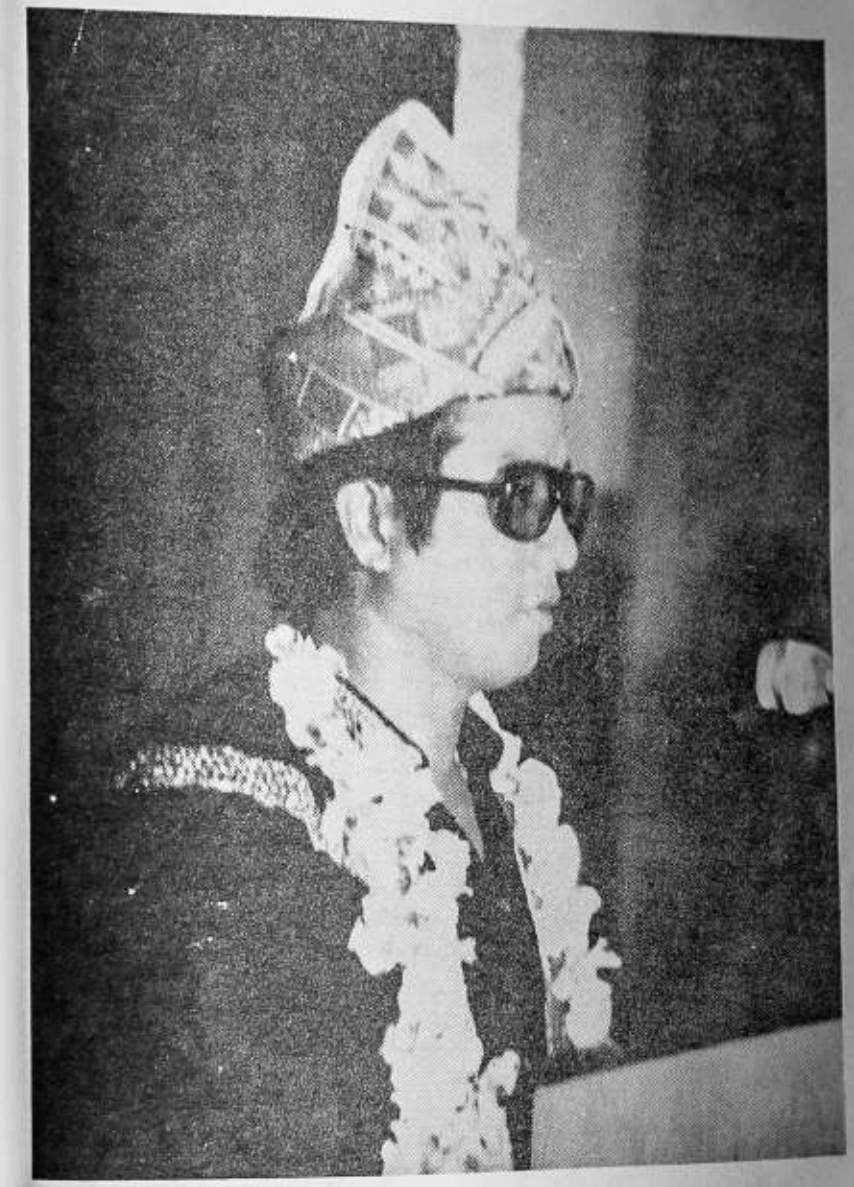


Campaining for Berjaya with Tun Fuad during the General Elections 1976

Peter meeting the Kadazan Rungus Community in the Kudat Residency.

Peter as Chairman of the Parent Teacher Association is seen presenting prizes during the School's Speech Day.

As Minister of Local Government and Housing, Peter visiting Low Cost Houses at Tanjung Aru



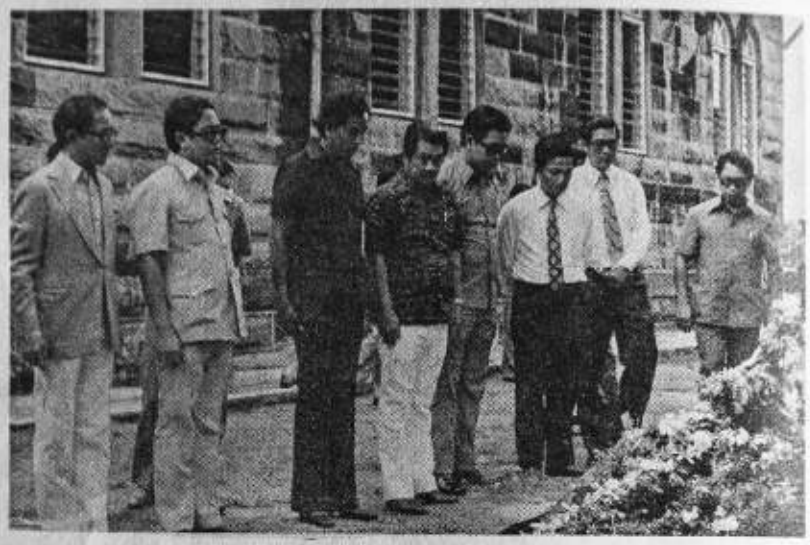
Peter in full Traditional Kadazan costume

Drinking Tapai (rice wine) at Harvest Festival with Tun Fuad.

Requiem High Mass for Datuk Peter Mojuntin at St. Michael's Church, Penampang.

A sorrowful Conrad Mojuntin stands near his dead brother.

The bereaved wife and family overcome with anguish



Peter's Cabinet Colleagues, pay their last farewell.
(L - R : YB Stephen Wong (Asst. Minister); YB Clarance Mansul (Asst. Minister); YAB Datuk Harris Salleh (Chief Minister); YB Senator Tan Sri Datuk Yeh Pao Tzu; YB James Ongkili (Deputy Chief Minister); YB Wong Yaw Ket (Asst. Minister); YB Yap Pak Leong (Minister, YB Joseph Pirin Kitingan (Minister).

Berjaya – The Epitome Of Peter's Dreams

There is a limit to a person's endurance especially if the issue fringes around sensitive areas. Both the physical and mental faculties seek outlets for expression The shape and form it finally takes would correspond to the gravity of the situation. When these outlets are denied, dissidents would resort to unconstitutional means. Democracy would then cease to have significance.

But it was not so in Sabah. The people remained steadfast in their belief in democracy, fully aware that it was only through this process that the Rule of Law and sanity could return to their homeland.

Very often their silence and patience were mistaken for weakness. The outside world viewed this inertia as a sign of fear, of being kept in the Kepayan cells. But in silence they spread their resistance. They spread the message that USNO must be vanquished.

On the political front the only visible opposition came from the denunciations of Peter Mojuntin. While the majority resisted in silence or remained neutral in order not to offend the Establishment, he travelled extensively working towards the destruction of USNO.

Whenever he had an opportunity he demanded the safeguards as embodied in the Twenty Points. It was Sabah's condition for joining Malaysia. It was on the basis of those Twenty Points that he launched most of his attacks on the State and Federal Governments. They were important because they provided protection against the misuse of power.

The Twenty Points whose agreement was reached prior to the promulgation of Malaysia which Peter and other political leaders in Sabah had repeatedly echoed are :

1. *RELIGION:* While there was no objection to Islam being the National religion of Malaysia there should be no state religion in North Borneo, and the provisions relating to Islam in the present Constitution of Malaya should not apply to North Borneo.

2. *LANGUAGE:* (a) Malay should be the National Language of the Federation (b) English should continue to be used for a period of ten years after Malaysia Day; (c) English should be the official language of North Borneo, for all purposes State and Federal, without limitation of time.

3. *CONSTITUTION:* Whilst accepting that the present Constitution of the Federation of Malaya should form the basis of the Constitution of Malaysia, the Constitution of Malaysia should be a completely new document drafted and agreed in the light of a free association of States and should not be a series of amendments to a Constitution drafted and agreed by different States in totally different circumstances. A new Constitution for North Borneo was, of course, essential.

4. *HEAD OF THE FEDERATION:* The Head of State in North Borneo should not be eligible for election as Head of the Federation.

5. *NAME OF THE FEDERATION:* "Malaysia" but not "Melayu Raya".

6. *IMMIGRATION:* Control over immigration into any part of Malaysia from outside should rest with the Central Government but entry into North Borneo should also require the approval of the State Government. The Federal Government should not be able to veto the entry of persons into North Borneo for State Government purposes except on strictly security grounds. North Borneo should have unfettered control over the movement of persons, other than those in Federal Government employ, from other parts of Malaysia into North Borneo.

7. *RIGHT OF SECESSION:* There should be no right to secede from the Federation.

8. *BORNEONISATION:* Of public services should proceed as quickly as possible.

9. *BRITISH OFFICERS:* Every effort should be made to encourage British Officers to remain in the Public Services until their places can be taken by suitably qualified people from North Borneo.

10. *CITIZENSHIP:* The recommendations in paragraph 148(k) of the Report of the Cobbold Commission should govern the citizenship rights in the Federation of North Borneo subject to the following amendments:
    (a) subparagraph (1) should not contain the proviso as to five years of residence;
    (b) in order to tie up with our law, subparagraph (11)(a) should read 'seven out of ten years' instead of 'eight out of twelve years'.

(c) subparagraph (111) should not contain any restriction tied to the citizenship of parents – a person born in North Borneo after Malaysia must be a Federal citizen.

11. *TARIFFS AND FINANCE:* North Borneo should have control of its own finance, development funds and tariffs.

12. *SPECIAL POSITION OF INDIGENOUS RACES:* In principal, the inuigenous races of North Borneo should enjoy special rights analogous to those enjoyed by Malays in Malaya, but the present Malayan formula in this regard is not necessarilly applicable in North Borneo.

13. *STATE GOVERNMENT:* (a) The Chief Minister should be elected by unofficial members of the Legislative Council, (b) there should be a proper Ministerial system in North Borneo.

14. *TRANSITIONAL PERIOD:* This should be seven years and during such period legislative power must be left with the State of North Borneo by the Constitution and not be merely delegated to the State Government by the Federal Government.

15. *EDUCATION:* The existing Educational System of North Borneo should be maintained and for this reason it should be under State Control.

16. *CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS:* No amendments, modification or withdrawal of any special safeguards granted to North Borneo should be made by the Central Government without the positive concurrence of the Government of the State of North Borneo. The power of amending the Constitution of the State of North Borneo belongs exclusively to the people in the State.

17. *REPRESENTATION IN THE FEDERAL PARLIAMENT:* This should take account not only of the population of North Borneo but also of its size and potentialities and in any case should not be less than that of Singapore.

18. *NAME AND HEAD OF STATE:* Yang DiPertua Negara.

19. *NAME OF STATE :* Sabah.

20. *LAND, FORESTS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETC.:* The provisions in the Constitution of the Federation in respect of the powers of the National Land Council should not apply in North Borneo. Likewise the National Council for Local Government should not apply in North Borneo.

Peter realised that an alternative political party was the only answer. But he was alone. Tun Fuad was still in Australia as Malaysia's High Commissioner. He knew that the conduct of the USNO regime was condoned by the Federal Government. He had to discover a way to convince the Kuala Lumpur Government to take urgent steps to eliminate the blatant injustice and corruption in Sabah. He had to convince the Malaysian Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, whose co-operation was essential in ousting Tun Mustapha. He made several trips to the Capital, but the Prime Minister could not find time to meet him.

The truth was that the Prime Minister had been fed with false and malicious information by the USNO Government and their henchmen. Furthermore Tun Razak was embarrassed by the persecution issue.

Peter knew that if he were to register a new political party it would have to be one that was multi-racial. With his

wealth of experience in the political arena he was aware of the prerequisites in the formation of a political party. Besides presenting a respectable list of office bearers the party needed sound financial backing.

The nucleus of a new political party to act as an antidote or medicine began to take shape. Its name was USAP *(Union of Sabah People's party)*. The name was befitting because USAP in the Kadazan language means 'medicine'. Among those who were approached as early as 1971, was Datuk James Ongkili, then a lecturer at the University of Malaya, now a Deputy Chief Minister of Sabah. Peter also enlisted the aid of five prominent Chinese financiers and secret negotiations were conducted with a few USNO Cabinet Ministers who Peter hoped would break-away from the ruling party and join him in the formation of USAP.

With those assurances, Peter J. Mojuntin and his associate Fredrick Tan, left for Kuala Lumpur in February 1971. There in the Federal Capital Peter held a press conference in the company of several leading opposition politicians to officially announce the formation of USAP. Fredrick Tan and James Ongkili were responisble for the registration of USAP. However James Ongkili requested for time before plunging himself into the political arena.

When the news that USAP had been formed and registered reached Sabah, there was fear in the USNO camp. They feared that many would join the ranks of Peter J. Mojuntin and all that was taking place in Sabah would surface. If that happened many heads would roll. USAP had to be stopped. On the contrary, the formation of USAP changed the attitude of the Central Government. Tun Abdul Razak, the Prime Minister whom Peter had tried to meet so many times without any success, suddenly found time for him! At last the inertia was eliminated. Peter met Tun Razak on more

than one occasion and during those meetings the Prime Minister assured Peter that all his grievances would be investigated to his satisfaction.

While Peter was in Kuala Lumpur attending to the affairs of USAP, he received telephone calls daily from his wife Nancy who briefed him on the situation in Sabah. During those 10 days that he stayed in Kuala Lumpur, Nancy constantly received telephone threats whilst scores of individuals came to her house demanding money, claiming that they had campaigned for USAP and Peter had promised them payment. She also informed Peter that several government servants were dismissed because they were suspected of having collaborated with Peter in the formation of USAP.

When Peter returned to Sabah he found a letter from Tun Fuad awaiting his attention. Tun Fuad persuaded Peter to dissolve USAP. Relating what happened, Dominic Chu, another close associate said : "Tun Fuad persuaded Peter to dissolve USAP. He expressed the fear that if Peter failed, there would be more difficulties. The people would suffer and his Chinese supporters would be the first to be arrested. He also said that more than 300 Special Branch personnel were deployed to investigate the names of Peter's supporters. He feared that finally the people would blame Peter."

Peter replied to Tun Fuad but he did not agree to dissolve USAP. He said that the people had suffered enough and there was nothing worse that they could suffer. He said that he was prepared to shoulder the responsibilities alone. He also reminded Tun Fuad about the UPKO dissolution. He said : "I did not agree with the dissolution. I wanted to take over, but I was out-voted."

During the next few days Dato Ghani Gilong, Syed Keruak and Mustapha's brother visited Peter, hoping to

dissuade him from carrying out his planned objectives. They wanted him to rejoin USNO. Peter refused to budge.

While pressures were being mounted to dissolve USAP, Peter was also confronted with problems posed by his own supporters. The five Chinese supporters that promised financial support began to waver. Four of them asked for time while the other was suddenly untraceable! The USNO Assemblymen too had cold feet. Peter was alone again, without any financial support or power base.

In the midst of this uncertainty Peter realised that his move was a wee bit premature. He realise that he had not fortified USAP's foundations sufficiently. There were not many "Peter Mojuntins" around to face the heavy odds. He made up his mind that if in the final analysis he was compelled to dissolve USAP, he would attempt to obtain maximum advantages.

He agreed to dissolve USAP and rejoin USNO only after he was promised that the government would change its attitude. In preparation for the official dissolution of USAP, Peter flew to Kuala Lumpur accompanied by Dato Ghani Gilong, Syed Keruak and other USNO leaders. He was asked to sign a statement prepared by none other than USNO's kingmaker, Syed Kechik. Peter was not a stooge. He prepared a simple statement and announced the dissolution of USAP.

Commenting on the dissolution, Peter said to a friend; "USAP was like a survey. USNO did not know how to conduct a survey and find out how many fishes there were in the deep water but by now they know and by now the people know that they have 'hope'. USNO will know by now their true position and their weakness." On his return to Kota Kinabalu Peter rejoined USNO and was returned

unopposed for a second term in the Moyog constituency in the 1971 General Elections for the Sabah State Legislative Assembly. With the aim of enticing him to join their ranks and abandon his principles, the USNO Government appointed him Assistant Minister of Industrial Development and member of the USNO Supreme Council.

It was USNO's plot to discredit Peter and destroy his popularity and support. The scheme was to shower Peter with maximum benefits. In the eyes of the electorate, it would appear that Peter could be bought for a price, perhaps a little more than 30 pieces of silver! They made him an Asaistant Minister, they gave him timber concessions, and in 1974 they conferred on him the award of 'Panglima Pemilang Darjah Kinabalu' (PGDK) which carried the title of *Datuk* – Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin. It was an accolade he richly deserved.

He had received his "knighthood". But neither knighthood nor position could buy the soul of Datuk Peter. He was not going to negotiate his convictions or his soul for 30 pieces of silver. He had a life time mission. He was obsessed with the desire to bring back democracy and decency to his home land. But many misunderstood him. Many thought that he was bought over and had forgotten the simple *kampong* folk of the interiors especially now that he had rejoined USNO'S ranks.

During the next few years Peter was very quiet and this silence began to create doubts in the minds of his supporters. His sincerity was questioned and his popularity fell. To his confidantes he said: "There are times when silence is golden, and this is a time when silence is golden. I cannot tell anything even to you, even though I have entrusted you all along. I know a lot of people are cursing me. Some are criticising me but one day they will know."

Unknown to many, during the years of Peter's self-imposed silence, a clique was in the making – a clique comprising Datuk Peter, Mohamad Nor, Salleh Sulong, Chong Thian Voon and Tun Fuad. According to Dominic Chu, Peter later revealed that after the dissolution of USAP, they began to clique. Peter and two others made several trips overseas, either travelling alone or together to Indonesia, the Philippines, Australia, England, the Middle East and Hong Kong. Although many believed at that time they were out on business trips, in reality they were compiling a dossier on Tun Mustapha's affairs in all these countries. Documents and photographs were collected under one pretext or another. Meetings were held with Tun Fuad in Australia, with Malaysian Ministers in Kuala Lumpur and with a few USNO Assemblymen in Sabah.

The relationship between Tun Mustapha and the Federal Government especially the Prime Minister Tun Razak, was fast deteriorating. Tun Mustapha was a source of embarrassment to Malaysia's international reputation. His use of the State owned Boeing 707 jet, hopping from city to city around the world with expenses met by the State coffers, infuriated Tun Razak. As the Chief Minister of Sabah, Tun Mustapha was found not in his office but in casinos and dance halls or in playboy-clubs in other parts of the world! His open support for the Moro Liberation Front in the Sulu Islands against the Marcos Government was straining Asean relationships and creating an international diplomatic embarrassment.

It is believed that sometime in 1974 Tun Mustapha discussed with Tun Razak the possibility of making him the Sultan of Sabah. It was flatly refused by the Malaysian Prime Minister. On the other hand, Tun Razak who was by then reaching the limits of toleration, warned Tun Mustapha to change his ways and to return to Sabah. All the warnings

and advice fell on deaf ears. Any chance for a reconciliation between Tun Razak and Tun Mustapha came to an end when the latter refused to accept the Defence Minister's portfolio. It was a parting of the ways. Tun Razak had hoped that as a Federal Minister, Tun Mustapha would have no alternative but to be in Kuala Lumpur. It was a price Mustapha was not prepared to pay.

Datuk Peter knew of the deteriorating relationship between Tun Mustapha and the Malaysian Prime Minister. He knew that if ever there was a better time to topple Tun Mustapha, that was the time. He and the clique that he had formed after USAP's dissolution, made several trips to Kuala Lumpur and met Ghaffar Baba, the Secretary General of the *Barisan National*, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad and other Ministers who could not see eye to eye with Tun Mustapha. At the same time, Tun Mustapha aligned himself with the anti-Razak forces and this only widened the gap of animosity. Tun Mustapha put the noose around his own neck and was instrumental for his own downfall.

In those 'shuttle trips' between Kota Kinabalu and Kuala Lumpur, other USNO Cabinet Ministers were involved. In one of these discussions, it was agreed that the only person who was equivalent in status to Tun Mustapha in the State of Sabah, was the Malaysian High Commissioner to Australia, Tun Fuad Stephens. If the aim was to topple Mustapha from his high horse, it was imperative that Tun Fuad be recalled. This led to the appointment of Tun Fuad as Sabah's Yang DiPertua Negara in 1973 with the objective to cut Tun Mustapha down to size. It was a monumental task for Mustapha was the overlord of Sabah.

However, the return of Tun Fuad to Sabah and the political limelight was not hailed by the Kadazan community. The dissolution of UPKO had left a great scar. They were not prepared to forgive him.

It took Datuk Peter a great deal of effort to assemble the Kadazan leaders and the *Ketua Kampongs* at the Residence of the Yang Dipertua Negara and to explain to them that the dissolution of UPKO was not a betrayal of the people's trust. It had been a political necessity. Tun Fuad reassured them that if he had made a mistake in dissolving UPKO then he would redeem himself in the years to come. It is certain that none of those who attended the meeting appreciated Tun Fuad's statement. They probably left the Residency dissatisfied.

The frequency of discussions and the visits of Federal Ministers such as Ghaffar Baba and Abdullah Ahmad to Kota Kinabalu, gave rise to the formation of a new political party to oppose Tun Mustapha's USNO. Probably, the two major issues that many believe led to Tun Razak's decision to support the proposed political party was the allegation that Tun Mustapha was planning to secede from Malaysia and link Sabah with the Southern Philippine Islands. The other equally important probability was Tun Mustapha's request for a Federal Government endorsement for a substantial loan from the International Loaning Agencies to finance among other things, the renovation of the VIP Boeing 707 jet belonging to Sabah Air which would cost several million dollars.

There were strong indications that a new party was being formed and rumours spread everywhere but none knew who the pioneers were nor what it was called. By 1975 the rumour grew even stronger, that Tun Fuad, Peter Mojuntin and some USNO Ministers were planning a new party. There was some truth in the rumour because discussions were held in the Residency on several occassions. In some USNO quarters pressure mounted against Tun Fuad but there was nothing tangible in their accusations. In July 1975 there were rumours of a 'Palace Revolution'.

Tun Mustapha did not take these rumours seriously. He was perhaps over confident and continued to waste his time in the cities of London, Paris and Saudi-Arabia.

On the 15th of July 1975 a new political party – Party Berjaya – Bersatu Rakyat Jelita Sabah (Sabah People's Party) was launched. The names of the office bearers were made public: Datuk Harris Salleh – President; Datuk Ghani Gilong, Yeh Pao Tzu, Tuan Hj. Ampong Puyong – Vice Presidents, Tuan Hj. Mohd. Nor – Secretary General; En. Joseph Pairin Kitigan – Assistant Secretary General, Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin – Treasurer General; En. Michael Wong – Assistant Treasurer General; Committee Members: Datuk Yassin Hashim, Datuk Salleh Sulong, Datuk Ngui Tot Loi, Datuk Suffian Koroh, Datuk Anthony Gibun, Taun Hj. Salleh Otik, Encik Ali Bandiong, Tuan Hj. Mohktar, Encik Patrick Madalag, Encik Amadeus Leong, Encik James Ongkili and Encik Paul Buklin. The formation of Party Berjaya had the blessing and full sanction of the Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak.

At the press conference, Party Berjaya made a pledge to the nation to struggle for the following :

1. To preserve and protect the intergrity, independence and the democratic status of Malaysia and to uphold the principles of the Rukunegara.
2. To preserve and protect the rights and interests of Sabah within Malaysia.
3. To establish, promote and safeguard a just, progressive and democratic government of the people, by the people and for the people.
4. To bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities than those existing in the present system in Sabah.

5. To safeguard and promote the constitutional rights and priviliges of every citizen in Sabah within a multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious Malaysia.

The new party spread like a spark on a dehydrated grass-land. USNO branches crumbled everywhere. Ministers and Assistant Ministers resigned to join Berjaya. Assembly-men crossed the floor and identified themselves with the new party. It was the end of Sabah's potentate.

To understand the situation that compelled Datuk Peter and the other political figures in Sabah to close ranks and oppose the Government of Tun Mustapha, there is no better way than to read the speech of Datuk Peter during the State Assembly meeting that was held after the formation of Party Berjaya. Speaking during the State Assembly meeting on Monday 11th August 1975 Datuk Peter said :

"The Chief Minister told us that on the 5th of June 1975 he had a meeting with the Prime Minister. He said that the Prime Minister had asked him many direct questions and he answered those questions which he considered to be true and denied those questions that were not true. In particular the Chief Minister said he was asked by the Prime Minister regarding the reported contact with the President of the Philippines. The Chief Minister said he had denied having any contacts regarding the Sabah claim but then he said, "I can make any personal contact on a personal basis as a friend. " The truth is two visits were made."

"The Chief Minister was planning in fact a U.D.I. – Unilateral Declaration of Independence. He said the election was coming; we must win 48 seats. I looked at his face and the Chief Minister said, "if there were two or three independent candidates, we can entice them to join us.' What could I do? I just smiled. It was very clear. The Chief Minister had no intention of resigning, he had the intention of a snap

election; to clean sweep the 48 seats. After getting the 48 seats, he would claim that the people of Sabah had given him the mandate – the full mandate to declare UDI and that we know, because he has been talking about this, he had been dreaming about this. In fact, six months after that, if he managed to get Sabah out of Malaysia, he would say again with rallies all over the country, it is the people that have chosen him as the Raja or Sultan of Sabah."

Regarding timber the Chief Minister said "if my Government was corrupt then all the others are corrupted because he said, they were given timber concessions like Nahabu Company, for instance, which was given by the then British Government. The Chief Minister himself was given a concession too and another Datuk was also given a concession – there were three. But Nahabu Company invited 167 people to join in the Company. The Chief Minister's Company was only for himself and a few friends around him. But let us not talk about 300 acres, 500 acres, 1,000 acres, let us talk about hundreds of square miles of timber land !

Chandramata Sdn Bhd. owns 340 sq. miles. Who are the owners ? The Chief Minister himself. According to the licence, Tun Mustapha and two, three or four other persons who have a little share. The Chief Minister gives his company, Chandramata Sdn. Bhd., 340 square miles. Well, this if left to the people of Sabah to decide what sort of action this is. Is this the action of a responsible leader ? 340 sq. miles special licence ?

Another Company Syarikat Segama Sdn. Bhd., 100 sq. miles; the share holders are Datuk Syed Kechik, Datuk Salam and Syed Salim. This particuar area, 100 sq. miles, was taken from the Sabah Foundation area. The Chief

Minister has told the people of Sabah that the Sabah Foundation area is a property of the people of Sabah !

Another Company, Buhayan Sdn. Bhd. 70 sq. miles. Who are the owners ? Datuk Syed Kechik and Datuk Abdul Salam; again Sungei Milian Sdn. Bhd. an area of 100 sq. miles. The owner is Datuk Mohd. Ali Tan again. Another one, Enterprise Sdn. Bhd., 100 sq. miles. The owners, I am sorry to say here, are the two sons of the Chief Minister's brother Datuk Aliuddin bin Dato Harun.

Another company Sandakan Veneer Sdn. Bhd., 40 sq. miles or a total of 1,550 sq. miles.

"This is not a small matter, Datuk Speaker; this needs explanation. Why did the Chief Minister give to his brother, to Senator Datuk Syed Kechik and his brother Mohd. Ali Tan and his wife ? Why did he give these concessions ? When the fact is that the poor *kampong* people in Labuk, Sugut, Ulu Kinabatangan are asking for 15 acres – no more land! Some are asking for 100 acres, 300 acres, no more land! These are questions to be answered by the Chief Minister as the responsible leader of the present Government."

"Regarding political detention, the Chief Minister said he has no authority. After the May 13th. 1969 riots in Kuala Lumpur, *Menteri-Besar's* and Chief Ministers were given a certain amount of say in the internal security of the state. In the case of Sabah, this certain amount of power-authority was taken away in May this year. I came to know of it because I know that in the list of names recommended by the Chief Minister for detention to the "University of Kapayan" was my name! The seventh was mine and Datuk Harris was the other one. The Chief Minister is very correct that I am lucky because the power was taken away from him. Kuala Lumpur said no more. No more. The people of Sabah have suffered enough. There is need for

me to go deeper into this so everyone will know who is responsible for these sufferings."

"The Chief Minister, Datuk Speaker, has chosen to keep quiet on revelations about the $6 million that he took for himself. I cannot believe he doesn't know that it was made public. Why ? He must have a reason for keeping quiet on this. Why not explain it ?"

"Regarding the post of Defence Minister , he said he wanted to accept it; he asked for it in fact, in writing. I heard it and the Chief Minister can't deny this, that he asked for it in writing. Then he said leaders of USNO appealed to him not to accept. Well, I have already explained that the Chief Minister could do anything. He asked the leaders of USNO in order to give himself an excuse not to accept the post of Defence Minister, to sign a petition. It is as simple as that. It is not very difficult to understand. He asked for the petition; it was given because he was the leader of USNO."

"How does he pretend that USNO did not want him to be Defence Minister when he himself wrote in the first place, asking for it ?"

"The reason is that he still wants power in Sabah. He wants absolute power in Sabah. As defence Minister, he must work in Kuala Lumpur, sit in Parliament and answer questions. As Defence Minister, I am sorry to say, he would not be able to fly to Australia to visit his palace and his wife there; to visit London, to visit Beirut, to fly all over the place and have full use of the Sabah Jet. He will have no more facilities like that. He cannot do just what he likes. That was why he did not want the post of Defence Minister, a high post, third in line from the Prime Minister. That is the explanation for his refusal to accept the post of Defence Minister."

"Regarding the US 1 billion dollars loan; this is really mortgaging not only Sabah but the whole people of Sabah including our children and those who are not born yet ! One billion dollars, about 2.5 billion Malaysian dollars, this is not a small sum. It should have been discussed here first in the Legislative Assembly. The permission of this House should first be sought before an attempt was made by the State Government to try to mortgage the people of Sabah and the State of Sabah; but it was not done; this was done in secret ! Because Berjaya was established, the secret plans to borrow money through the SEDC (State Economic Development Corporation) failed. There are also other explanations. First the Federal Government was asked to guarantee. Of course the Federal Government said 'NO' and then a way had to be found to try to get this money, not only for the Boeing 707, but also to finance the 'palaces' of the Chief Minister.

"Regarding languages, I was one of the signatories asked by the Chief Minister to sign. I represented the Kadazan. The Chief Minister, before he signed, explained verbally to those present that the plan of the Malaysian Government was to do away with all other languages. In Semenanjung Malaysia only Bahasa and English; in Sarawak also, Bahasa and English and in Sabah in time to come it will also be Bahasa and English. But the Chief Minister said we sign it first and I am sure, like myself, all the other signatories believed him. But apparently, he was not telling the truth. We were made to believe that it was the Central Government who wanted this, who wanted to stop other languages over the radio. So like the innocent, we all signed because we really wanted to work for the country we really believed in. But now, in Peninsular Malaysia, other languages are still being used. In Sarawak, the Ibans and the Dayaks in the Ulu near the border of Indonesia, can still

tune to Radio Sarawak. In Sabah, I am sorry to say, our people in the border with Indonesia on the Croker Range, in the Labuk/Sungut, Bengkoka area, don't understand a word of what is being said by Radio Malaysia Sabah, because their language is only *'pergi pasar, beli ikan,'* and because of that, the people in the ulus of Sabah are very unhappy."

"They don't even understand what the policy of the Government is. So this in fact is also working against the Government. I know for certain that people in the Kampong, even in my constituency Moyog, 10 miles from the State Capital, have been crying. What is the purpose of giving them a radio when the people do not understand what is being said over the radio ?"

"Another point raised by the Chief Minister – Aeroplanes – supposed to be for VIPs. The Chief Minister's character is such that he will bring the names of innocent ladies, he will imply the names of innocent ladies, that these are for the use of innocent ladies not only for my girlfriends," he said.

"But the Chief Minister did stress that the aeroplanes were bought to carry VIPs for instance a Member of the Assembly. What ? Where they went ? What for they spend Government money ? They jetted out of Sabah and came only this morning. It is something the Chief Minister should explain because it is public fund. The two jets carrying VIPs like Mohd. Ali and friends from Beirut or from London. The top most VIPs we have in Sabah, sometimes have been denied the use of these aeroplanes. The former Yang DiPertua Negara, I know, when he was going to attend the Rulers Conference, had to go by MAS first class, when Sabah has 2 Jet planes for VIPs ! If the Yang DiPertua Negara is not a VIP then who is a VIP ? The Chief Minister cannot deny this. The two jet planes were used to fly him

to his house in Australia and the other one was used by his friends flying to the Middle East and Europe. In actual fact these two planes are for the personal use of the Chief Minister. All the Government servants, especially members of this Assembly, all present here know. Why then do they say this is not true ? Regarding the Boeing 707, I am very sorry about the explanations given by the Chief Minister. He talked about Spain having a plane industry there; he talked about other companies which are losing money but those are irrelevant. The fact is why does the Sabah Chief Minister have the full use of two jet planes – two Boeing 707. Why ? That's the question, why ?"

"Anyway it was reported from Miami Beach, Florida, that one Boeing 707 was renovated for 2.5 million US dollars ! The Chief Minister can't deny this. The reports say that he asked for 3 bed rooms, one lounge, 6 private lavatories, closed circuit television, red and green carpets. Because of this renovation, out of 170 seats, 127 seats were taken out and only 43 passengers can go in there ! I have never heard of any President or any Head of State in the world who has got this aeroplane but the Chief Minister of Sabah, who is only the Chief Minister of the State of Sabah within Malaysia, has the audacity to spend public money."

"I agree that the Chief Minister is quite handsome when he smiles but to say and to boast, that he is holding a glass of champagne, that he is a 'International Playboy, is unbecoming of a Chief Minister and he did say that. He maybe handsome and therefore he may have many girl-friends; that is his personal matter but my quarrel is because he is the Chief Minister of Sabah ! Why not do your work as Chief Minister of Sabah ? If you go night clubbing, if you want to entertain your girlfriends, do it, not at the time when you should spend your time as the Chief Minister of

Sabah. Out of 12 months, the Chief Minister spends about 10 months or 11 months galivanting around the world, jetting around to be more precise, visiting his Petaling Jaya house and visiting Surface Paradise in Australia. Going to Bangkok, for what ? Going to Beirut, going to London. If the Chief Minister wants to enjoy himself, wants only his comfort, please for goodness sake resign as Chief Minister and let other people in Sabah run the country ! Why not, that will be a simple solution. The fact is that because of his irresponsible action, there was no opposition party. He thought he could do anything with the money of the State of Sabah. He could do anything with the budget and he just asked for money. He also wanted to secure his total power, to secure absolute rule in Sabah. He wanted Sabah to secede from Malaysia and become a Sultan."

Speaking on another topic, the motion to express confidence in Tun Mustapha as Chief Minister of Sabah at the State Legislative Assembly meeting on Monday 11th August 1975 Datuk Peter Mojuntin said: "The question of a vote of Confidence in the Chief Minister, I would like to bring and stress again a few pertinent points. It has been made clear by all the speeches made, that they have been avoiding the issue – the accusations of mismanagement, the accusation of abuse of power, the accusation of corruption. If these accusations are not true, bring us all to court ! On the question of the Member of the Supreme Council of USNO, he was not a member of the so called Alliance National Council, they were just 'rubber stamps'. Let's face it and this is a fact. The Member from Keningau, said that this question of Berjaya coming up is only because the Chief Minister wanted to discuss the Twenty Points of Sabah's rights within Malaysia. I am sorry that he is misinformed. It is understandable that he is misinformed, because he just arrived from overseas this

morning! He has been away for the last two weeks. He doesn't know what has been going on here. He hasn't gone home, to his constituency yet. Talking about opportunists – my heart bleeds because the Honourable Member of Keningau did visit my house with his brother and wife. I don't want to say further because it is strange coming from him, the word 'opportunist'. Whether the USNO still trusts him is a matter for USNO, perhaps he would like to explain to USNO what he came to my house for? There are those who say Berjava leaders are bad or traitors who have stabbed the Chief Minister in the back. This is not true, because a party that won 12 seats, UPKO, dissolved and put its full support in the Chief Minister and his Government and for many years has been giving him support. Who are the traitors ? The trust of my supporters and the other supporters of the Honourable Members here have been abused. This is what we have been stressing. We have been supporting the Chief Minister but because he had abused his power as Chief Minister, the Chief Minister himself actually allowed this opposition party to come up in opposition to him ! If the opposition party had just come up, it would not be supported by the rakyat without good reason."

"Datuk Speaker, as I said, this is a vote of Confidence in the Chief Minister. How can I, in all sincerity, give my vote of confidence in the Chief Minister, who out of 12 months spends only about 2 months in Sabah and 10 months away from the state ? How can I give my vote of confidence to a Chief Minister who does not allow the members of his Cabinet to speak on their own behalf or on behalf of their own Ministry ?"

"The Chief Minister has been pretending to be 'anti-foreigners'. This is the statement that has been put in the press, that he was 'anti-foreigners'. Engineers in the Government service, PWD and others, were kicked out but then

again it was found out we do not have enough engineers. A few of them are left now. The immigration law has been abused to the extent which is really pitiful. Out of spite, just because the Chief Minister does not like certain people, they are made to suffer, work passes have been cancelled. It cannot be denied."

"If the Chief Minister really does not like foreigners, if he really wants the local to do what should be done here in Sabah, and not try to get expertise of technicians from other countries, then I fail to understand why the Chief Minister has been proven not only to like foreigners so much as to spend most of his time in their countries but he loves them so much to the extent that he marries their women. The abuse of Immigration laws have recently been used to guard the press – the Editor of the *Daily Express* and one other have been arrested just because they speak for the opposition and it published what the opposition says. Where is democracy ? The Chief Minister asks how he abused his power ? Isn't this the trick of a dictator ? Datuk Speaker, there is no need for me to say this but the Immigration powers were abused, have been abused and are still abused and it was so much abused at one time that a large majority of the people in Sabah had to cry their hearts out. Poor innocent missionaries and priests were sent out. They were deported, arrested, permanent stay immigration cancelled. This is a fact. The Minister of Industrial Development knows this. I think he shed a few tears with me. He knows the pain, how painful it has been for the vast majority of the *Bumiputras* and this was from the Chief Minister who said he wanted *Bumiputra* unity ! Who said he wanted to work for the *Bumiputras ?*"

"Another thing, it is totally impossible for me to give a vote of confidence to the Chief Minister now. A few years back, yes, I would have given him a vote of confidence, but

because of what happened from 1969 up to now that confidence is totally lost, as far as I am concerned. The Chief Minister said it is Government's policy to develop Sabah, so it is Government's policy to invite foreign investors. But the same person, the Chief Minister, does not believe in investing in Sabah. He invests millions of dollars in Australia, built a palace costing $4 million there, bought a factory which is owned by Helen More. That is only one; what about the nine hole golf course in Hendly near London ? How many millions is the private property of the Chief Minister ? Why not built a private golf course in and around Kota Kinabalu so that many of the people present here can also play in the golf course ?"

"I want to point out this, please answer, please explain, anyone from this Government side. Why 14 million dollars have been spent by the Special Service Fund and with irregular method ? Please explain that ! Another thing, Datuk Speaker, please why during last Malaysia Day celebrations only half a million or $600,000 dollars were supposed to be spent but then it came up to 6 million dollars! A bulb that cost 60 cents increased to $6/-? Pintas, it should have been completed a year ago. The contract was given to YB Member of Kudat – contract price $600,000 – until now the Pintas scheme has not been completed. Every-day I pass through bridge mile 2, Penampang Road. It has been many years since the contract was given to the Political Secretary to the Chief Minister, yet it has not been completed yet !"

"The Chief Minister has not answered this point. He repeatedly said that 2 persons from Kuala Lumpur and I person from Kuching helped to form Party Berjaya. This is completely not true. Who are they ? This is like looking for a ghost which is not present. But what is a fact and what has been known is that one person from Kedah had

for a long time been the political and Legal Adviser in USNO and that is why that same person has been given hundreds of sq. miles of Sabah timber !"

"The Chief Minister has been boasting about winning and losing in casinos in Beirut and in London. This is a fact. What is good enough for the Chief Minister is not good enough for the people. How can it be ?"

Datuk Peter knew that in Berjaya, he could fulfil his dreams. He worked night and day to spread the doctrine of the new party. In his constituency of Moyog, the entire USNO division representing the Penampang district, unanimously decided to join Berjaya en bloc. At that meeting on 17th July 1975, Datuk Peter said :

"The people of Sabah had given the power to Tun Mustapha to lead us in Sabah, but that power was used not for the good and benefit of the rakyat of Sabah but for his own ends and for his own enrichment; in doing this he had continually used threats of detention without any trial and the power given to him by the Central Government to maintain peace and harmony in the State has been used for putting many people into prison, whose only sin was their belief in the democratic process – the democracy which they had been promised when Sabah became an independent state within Malaysia."

"When the Central Government found out how he (Tun Mustapha) had misused the powers given to him, the Central Government withdrew these powers and I want you all to know that Tun Mustapha has no powers of arresting anyone any longer. For this we must thank the Central Government."

"I can also assure you all that the armed forces and the Police Force of Sabah will do their duty when called upon to

do so, to protect you and your rights as a free people in a free nation. Of this you need have no doubt whatsoever"

"We have suffered enough during the last few years. We reached the extent where no one was able to say anything the least critical of Mustapha because such criticism meant 'KEPAYAN'."
(Kepayan is the detention prison where political prisoners are kept).

Speaking at Kota Kinabalu he said: "The Sabah Alliance is so fond of digging political graveyards for everyone in Sabah, that they seem to imply that all the constituencies in Sabah are burial grounds. If they wish to bury Berjaya, then all they are interested in, is to bury democracy in the State so that they can be free to exploit Sabah as they have done for the last eight years."

"True democracy believes in the presentation of alternatives. Berjaya has brought back democracy to Sabah, and is an alternative to the present USNO-SCA Alliance. In fact, we were fully confident that Berjaya will form the next Government in Sabah. Let us not talk about burials. The fight is only just beginning." Datuk Peter said that the speech by another political 'grave digging' USNO leader like Dzul (Datuk Hj. Dzulkifli) is an insult to the people of Penampang. He had said that Penampang would be the next graveyard for Berjaya. We in Berjaya have never talked about burying our political opponents. We believe in true democracy; the existence of a two party state is a healthy sign for Sabah, not a death wish, as that churned out by the USNO political morgue."

"We oppose the policies of the Alliance because their tactics at the Labuan and Kuala Kinabatangan by-elections show clearly their true colours – that they are willing

to stoop even to grave digging to cling to power. For the last eight years they have been busy buying the rights of the people of Sabah. They have been busily digging *rakyat's* wealth for their own selfish use."

"I am surprised," said Datuk Peter, that they talk of unity on the one hand and in the same breath, talk about finishing off those who disagree with them. Dzul has said that the people of Penampang were not intelligent in 1967, since he said that they were not able to decide for themselves in 1967. That is to insult the dignity and intelligence of the people of Penampang. We in Penampang have suffered the neglect, the contempt and the insults of the likes of Dzul for too long. And now we have to tolerate Dzul calling our beloved district "a grave yard". We are proud that our ancestors have lived and died in Penampang, and we shall live and die in Penampang. But let not Dzul talk of burying us here. We shall soon make him eat his political words."

"We have already said that USNO jackals will gloat and howl for the next two days and that is exactly what they are doing. We did not realise that they would do that in funeral terms. They talk of burying, of graveyards, of losing faith and of insults."

"Berjaya leaders have never wished political graves for USNO leaders. They have never expressed the wish that these leaders even Dzul, be politically 'buried'. Are the USNO leaders so senile that they can only think of death and burial ? Who has driven Sabah to bankruptcy ? Who has broken the Sabah plate of rice ?"

"In fact the Sabah rice plate is cracked precisely because Mustapha and his cronies are eating on gold plates. USNO propaganda is getting so hollow that I am inclined to believe that it is coming from cracked pots," he said.

"The people of Sabah should now talk of building, not destroying. Berjaya builds but USNO buries. That is why USNO will find only rejection at the coming general elections."

Unable to withstand the pressure from all quarters, Tun Mustapha resigned as Chief Minister of Sabah with effect from the 31st October 1975. The official announcement was made on Wednesday 3rd September 1975. He was succeeded by his Deputy, Tan Sri Mohd. Said Keruak. Peter's crusade to topple Mustapha finally succeeded.

At the opening of the Kolopis Branch, Datuk Peter said: "The first and most important gain by Berjaya for the people was to put an end to Tun Mustapha's secessionist move. Secondly, the people can now rest assured that Tun Mustapha will never be the Sultan of Sabah as had planned and dreamed."

"It is also Berjaya," he went on, "that can claim to have brought an end to the powers given to Tun Mustapha to arrest his opponents in the political field in the state and even more important to many, is the fact that there is now complete freedom of speech within the law, and complete freedom for everyone to practise the religion of their choice. Things like Carols by candlelight were almost forgotten but have now been revived and fanatics like Datuk Dzulkifli have even pretended to tolerate other religions by attending Catholic functions."

"Democracy is back and alive and it is again Berjaya which can claim credit for this. Corruption which was rife is now dying because of the call by Berjaya for the National Bureau of Investigation (Biro Siasatan National) to look into corruption in the State."

"One of the things which Berjaya can really be proud

about is the fact that it has brought down Mustapha as the Chief Minister, although Tun Mustapha is still trying for a come-back ! The people sure will see to it that this Dictator will never again be allowed to run Sabah."

He said that "it is common knowledge" that Tun Abdul Razak the late Prime Minister, was a supporter of Berjaya and he was confident that the present Prime Minister, Dato Hussein Onn, will continue the policies laid down by Tun Abdul Razak and give Berjaya the support which it deserves from all right thinking Malaysians."

For the Chinese population, he went on, "the Chinese New Year celebrated this year was almost unique because they were allowed to have the Lion Dance which Tun Mustapha had banned for so many years. But for Berjaya's promise to bring this back, the USNO government would not have allowed the Lion Dance to be performed."

"And now," Datuk Peter said, "to cap it all, the Government has been forced to bring back the local language programme over Radio Malaysia Sabah. He said it was Tun Mustapha alone, supported by his USNO minions, who had stopped the language programme but "he has tried to make it appear that the Federal Government was responsible for stopping the Kadazan, Chinese and Bajau radio programmes." The Federal Government had only done so because of the instigation of Tun Mustapha who said that he has 'obtained permission from Datuk Amar Taib Mahmud' to have the language programmes started again, although only the broadcast of news. "The idea no doubt is to try and sell his lying USNO propaganda through Radio Sabah in no other languages than Bahasa Malaysia because he knows only too well that much as everyone supports Bahasa Malaysia, many are still not up to the standard to understand the high standard used over radio."

Datuk Peter said "that the USNO propaganda says, that Tun Fuad had sold the UPKO and the Kadazans. If this has any truth then Tun Fuad should still be with the USNO and would not have given up his job as the 'King', the Head of State, where he enjoyed all the comforts which went with the office, to travel all over the country and meet the people and to lead Berjaya in the fight for freedom and justice."

He said "Tun Fuad had kept close touch with him and had in the past advised him to stay in UNSO for the sake of unity in the country and especially unity of the *Bumiputras*, but on Tun Fuad's return from Australia he was able to see at first hand the evil designs of Tun Mustapha and although a close personal friend of Mustapha, Tun Fuad had decided to 'sacrifice everything, and is willing even to sacrifice his life for the people."

If Tun Fuad had not been faithful to the rakyat and especially to the Kadazan, whose '*Huguan Siou*' he is, he Datuk Peter Mojuntin would be the first to fight against Tun Fuad and denounce him. "But I know Tun Fuad have kept in touch with him and know that he has no other desire than to see the people of Sabah united, happy and prosperous and free. It is because Tun Mustapha tried to enslave the people that Tun Fuad had decided to forget everything and come out to fight for the people."

At Kudat (Tun Mustapha's stronghold) Peter invited questions from the many representatives of the various *kampongs*. He explained fully the aims and objectives of Berjaya and answered questions put to him. The people appreciated very much the great sacrifices made by the Berjaya leaders in order to form Berjaya and to give back to the people freedom to think and talk freely about politics.

Numerous complaints were raised regarding

mistreatment by the present elected State representatives in the area. Datuk Peter promised that "Berjaya leaders have and always will respect all peoples of Sabah as intelligent individuals whose fight to be heard by the Government is unquestionable and whose wishes must be listened too. In the meantime, the party will continue to fight for the legitimate rights of the people of Sabah."

On the 4th September 1975, a day after the official announcement of Tun Mustapha's resignation, the Sabah Legislative Assembly debated on the 'Tun Dato Hj. Mustapha (Special Privileges) Enactment'. In opposing the Bill, Datuk Peter said:

"The Chief Minister, after anouncing his resignation yesterday, is obviously no more interested in the affairs of State being debated in this House "because of his absence here." It would seem clear that the Government is making sure that when they go out after being beaten in the next General Elections, their leader will be given more than others who have served this country in the same capacity, have ever received."

"I suppose when this House next meets we will have a Bill before us that will see to it that all the Ministers, Assistant Ministers and Political Secretaries of the Mustapha regime will similarly be given pensions, allowances, etc."

"This is of course a clear case again of the abuse of power given to Tun Mustapha by his selected and appointed members of this House."

"This Bill proposes to give Tun Mustapha after he retires, even more than what our former Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, has been given after his retirement."

"For eight years work as Chief Minister, when he has

already squandered millions of the State's revenue on himself, and for a self-proclaimed multimillionaire who has invested millions of dollars in England, Australia, Beirut and Jeddah, this Bill makes a mockery of this Honourable House if we are to approve it as it stands."

"A person who retires, should retire; give him a pension by all means. A pension for eight years of work, even though most of the work was done in the casinos of London – in Palm Beach casino, Mayfair London. A pension of a quarter or even a third of his salary as Chief Minister can be approved but to give him a pension which is about the same as the salary received by the Prime Minister of the Nation, with all the other trimmings – free car, free driver, free servants for the house, gardeners, bodyguards, outriders and to make a law that he will precede everyone else except the Yang DiPertua Negara in the State, is an insult to the Prime Minister and other Heads of State because if we pass this Bill it will mean that when the Prime Minister or any of the other Heads of State are in Sabah, protocol wise. they will not take precedence over Tun Mustapha." This is of course absolute nonsense. Why didn't his performing primates now that they have the two thirds majority they need, announce and make Tun Mustapha the King of Sabah for that appears to be the intention."

"We have said that Tun Mustapha wanted to be Sultan of Sabah and this proves it, having failed to carry out his intentions of Secession and making himself Sultan, he has now tried to make sure that he gets the next best thing at the expense of the *Rakyat* because it is the *Rakyat* who will have to pay for all these lavish extravagances mentioned in the Bill."

"The name 'Father of Independent Sabah' is to any student of History a farce because while others were fighting

for the independence of Sabah, Tun Mustapha was sitting on the fence and very much pro the Colonial Government from whom he received a great honour – the OBE and the Knight of St. John and if I remember rightly, he also used to have the KVO after his name. It was only very recently that he decided to leave out the OBE from among the Titles he uses – Officer of the British Empire. Is this the man who, according to the Bill, had given the leadership which 'had succeeded in freeing the State of Sabah from Colonial rule, resulting in Sabah achieving her independence through Malaysia ?"

"Let us try not to fool our children and History by such lies. Those old enough know that Tun Mustapha was persuaded to form USNO by Tun Fuad because Tun Fuad wanted all communities to be represented in forcing the British to give Sabah Independence; it was also Tun Fuad's suggestion that the United Party and the Democratic Party merge. and form the Sabah Chinese Association, thus bringing about the formation of the Sabah Alliance, a Party which was able to claim that it represented fully the population of Sabah as a whole, thus making it impossible for the Colonial Government to continue its hold on Sabah. Even the change of name from North Borneo to Sabah was first mooted by Tun Hj. Mohd. Fuad during the colonial days at a meeting of the Legislative Council when it was then agreed, that the name change should take place when Sabah attained its independence."

"Tun Mustapha came into power because of the support of the Sabah Chinese Association – I need not mention the Sabah Indian Congress because they are only an entity in name and nothing else after the 1967 elections – and when the UPKO for the sake of *Bumiputra* Unity, decided to dissolve and urged all its members to join USNO. The

assurance was that with such unity in the country under Tun Mustapha, progress and development could be truly accelerated and the *Rakyat Jelata* enjoy freedom and happiness."

"I would be a liar if I were to say that there has been no development. There has been development, much of it planned earlier during Tun Fuad's time as Chief Minister but as time went on – the unity which had been brought about by great sacrifices made by all sections of the population had in fact created a Frankenstein who thought he was above the Law and that he could do just about anything in Sabah – and deploy Sabah's finances, in a manner which was meant to enrich himself and a few of his relatives and cronies, especially the man who has been knows as the 'Rasputin' behind Tun Mustapha's throne, the newly sworn in Nominated Member from Kedah, the lawyer who came here as Tun Mustapha's political Secretary and engineered most, if not all, the machinery to turn the so called Sabah Foundation into something which in fact does not belong to the people but to Tun Mustapha."

"This House in a separate Bill today is asked to reinforce Tun Mustapha's and Syed Kechik's grip on the Foundation – the gold which has made it possible for Tun Mustapha to build all those palaces in Australia, England and to invest millions overseas and which has also made it possible for Syed Kechik to become all those things mentioned in a magazine called ' *Malayan Business.*'

"His extravagance in spending millions on aeroplanes which are of no use or benefit to the *Rakyat* at all is already well known. Section 4 (1) of this Bill is to my mind, intended to perpetuate his ability to use the Sabah Jet planes as the Bill states, 'the Tun shall be entitled free of charge to enjoy any facilities available to the Government'. This

could mean millions of the *Rakyat's* money, 'paid out of the consolidated Fund'."

"Such wild entitlement can mean that Tun Mustapha can and will have at his command the right to examine Government files, use Government transport for any of his political functions, make use of Government aircraft or seacraft, etc. In other words, if he is 'entitled free of charge to enjoy any facilities available to the Government' he would be more than a King, because even kings are not entitled and there are limits to what they can or cannot do with Government property."

Datuk Peter was interrupted and stopped. He was not permitted to finish his speech by the Speaker of the Assembly, Datuk Hj. Mohd. Kassim. Below is the unfinished portion of his speech on the Special Privileges Enactment on Tun Mustapha tabled on 4th September, 1975 .

"Section 5 makes it unnecessary for the Cabinet to consult the Assembly if it considers that an increase in Tun Mustapha's pension is necessary. If we pass this Bill today, there is nothing to stop the cabinet at a meeting within the next week to increase Tun Mustapha's pension to 10,000 dollars a month or even more! How can the Cabinet be given such powers? If there are to be any changes to the provisions of any Bill surely such changes can only legally be made in this Assembly."

"If the Attorney General would spend more of his time in attending to the Legal needs of this country, maybe he would have realised that Section 4 (4) is in fact ULTRA VIRES because Sabah surely has no power to legislate to cover the whole of Malaysia. Section 4 (4) reads : "When the Tun shall travel in any official motor car in Malaysia there shall be provided a police outrider."

"Since when has this House taken over the functions of the Parliament of our Nation and given the right to legislate to cover the whole of Malaysia?"

"This is of course not the first time that the Attorney General in his zeal to please his master has forgotten the law. But if we are to pass this particular clause we would be the laughing stock of the country. I will not be a party to such stupidity. I think these and all other clauses in this Bill should be deleted except for the clause which says that a pension should be paid to the Chief Minister. But such a pension should apply to all Chief Ministers that serve Sabah and not only to Tun Datuk Mustapha."

"We know of course that USNO has some very ambitious leaders who are willing to pay any price to see that Mustapna retires and it is not difficult to visualise the reason for making it go so good for him, if he were to retire. These are the ones who hope to take over USNO when Tun Mustapha retires and to themselves – to go on robbing the *Rakyat* of their rights and the resources of the country which rightly belongs to the Rakyat."

"Must the *Rakyat* pay such a high price to rid the State of a Chief Minister? That he should go, no one will argue but not at such a price. Even if half the price is paid then it should be fair but that the present retiring Chief Minister must return all the millions of dollars he had taken from the *Rakyat*."

"Rewards are due to those who have served the country and *Rakyat* sincerly and honestly, not those who have intimidated the *rakyat*, cheated them and squandered millions – on himself and his toys like Boeing 707's. A person who is this House called himself 'handsome' and gave this as a reason for the girlfriends he has all over the world,

girlfriends who are no doubt only interested in the handsomeness of the money he gives them – money which should have been spent in Sabah and not on expensive jewellery for foreign women who have not one bit of interest in Sabah. Does he deserve to be given all these special – rather extraordinary privileges, when he leaves his post of Chief Minister ?".

"Is he leaving, or is he being sacked by USNO and the sacking being sweetened by promises of the provisions of the Bill? Whatever the answer, I would ask all Honourable Members of this House to think carefully before they lend their eyes to this Bill because if they do, they will have to answer for it not only to the *Rakyat* but their names will be recorded as having been a party to what the *Rakyat* will consider a crime against the *rakyat*, – daylight robbery made legal by their actions. Let all right thinking Honourable Members of this House consider seriously the reprecusssions of this Bill before they vote for it. As I have said, I am willing to agree to a pension being paid to the Chief Minister but such a pension should be paid to all who have served as Chief Minister on a reasonable and equitable basis, but more than that, I will not and cannot support."

In December 1975, Berjaya suffered a temporary setback. In the by-election which they contested, their candidates were defeated. The by-elections were caused by the resignations of Datuk Harris Salleh and Datuk Salleh Sulong who had signed those undated letters during the 1971 General Elections. The constituencies of Kuala Kinabatangan and Labuan were USNO strongholds. The temporary defeat assisted in strengthening the determination of the Berjaya leaders. They knew they had a bigger challenge to meet. In a few months, the State Elections would be held. That was the election which they had to work and prepare, for

they aimed to replace the Government.

The date for the Sabah state elections was announce. April 14th. 1976 was to be the day of decision – whether USNO would stay on and further consolidate its power or make way for a new Government. Although Datuk Peter and some of his colleagues had been working hard during the past years to oust the USNO Government, they refused to be complacent. Everyday, they toiled to establish new branches or neutralised hostile grounds. When Pekemas attempted to stake its influence in Sabah, Datuk Peter managed to convince the majority to join Berjaya, which they did

At Nasob, Penampang, more than 200 individuals mostly Pekemas members adopted a resolution to dissolve the Pekemas branch and formed a Berjaya Branch.

Speaking at the ceremony Datuk Peter said : "All of us are aware and have suffered under the dictatorial rule of Tun Mustapha. We were led by the nose long enough and now we stand firm together to face and challenge him before the eyes of the people."

"Our aim of forming Berjaya is to return to the people their rights and aspirations which had been taken from them. We have said it before, and I say it again, the leaders of Berjaya are not a power hungry bunch whose ambition is for personal gain. Our concern is only for the betterment of the livelihood of the people of Sabah and to see that evey-body gets a fair share of the wealth of the country."

"In this new party every member is given the opportunity to vioce his opinion; criticism is also welcome on those who have not performed their duties in accordance with the wishes of the people. We are liberal and open-minded because we believe in democracy. We take criticism from

anybody so that through such criticism we learn to correct ourselves and hope to do better to the satisfaction of all the communities," he said.

In Kuala Lumpur, the Democratic Action Party was requested by National Front leaders and Ministers, not to field candidates in the 1976 Sabah elections. They feared that if the DAP contested, the votes might be split causing USNO to be returned to power. I was present when one Assistant Minister appealed to DAP leaders whom he met along the corridors of Parliament House during one of its sittings. He said, "since we have a common foe, it would be better for the DAP not to contest, otherwise USNO may win which would certainly be against DAP's interest." (DAP Secretary-General was twice refused entry into Sabah).

Berjaya entered the General Elections, fully geared with Tun Fuad at the helm. He had resigned as the Head of State to be the President of Berjaya. In the Moyog constituency, an election committee was set up to prepare for the State General elections. Everyone at Moyog division knew that its candidate Datuk Peter Mojuntin, would not have sufficient time to canvass in his constituency. Peter was needed elsewhere. The aim was to defeat USNO and there was no one better qualified for that arduous task than Peter Mojuntin. While preparations were underway, Peter visited the interiors and spent some time in Kudat, destroying USNO's stronghold there.

In the Moyog constituency, Fredrick Tan was Director of Operations for the entire election. 200 campaigners had volunteered to help Datuk Peter in retaining his seat. Nomination Day was set for 18th March 1976. The USNO candidate was Joseph Lanjuat.

April 14, 1976 – a historic date in the annals of

Sabah – Polling day began. The voters arrived hours before the polling stations were opened. They came enthusiastically to cast their votes to choose their leaders. Polling went on smoothly, free from any serious incidents, unlike in the previous elections, the police force was used as instruments of the Government to instil fear and to arrest Independent candidates and their supporters.

But in this general election, the police were given specific orders under a new commanding officer, to keep law and order irrespective of rank of office. When polling ended at 6.00 p.m. everyone was anxious for the result. The majority had cast their votes and wanted to know. To most Sabahans it was a sleepless night. There was a neck to neck fight in the beginning. The results were finally confirmed by 1.00 a.m. the following day. Berjaya had won. With still a few more results to be announced, Berjaya had already won 25 out of 48 seats. Sabah had a new government. Berjaya had "buried" USNO.

The Moyog constituency result came in early. Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin obtained 4,020 votes, the USNO candidate polling only 608 votes ! Spoilt votes totalled 128. The constituency had a total of 5,601 voters. Datuk Peter had again scored the biggest majority in another general election.

The people's hopes, their prayers and their dreams were fulfilled. USNO was rejected. The people had made their choice. When all the results were announced, Berjaya had won 28 seats. Peter's dream had come true, he had delivered his people (Sabahans) from bondage and let them into the Promised Land. But for him the reprieve was only for 53 days.

The Last Fifty–Three Days

It is difficult to visualise the scenario on that Thursday morning of April 15, 1976, when news of Berjaya's victory in the general election was announced. Malaysians everywhere, the young and old, the scholar and the illiterate, the poor and the affluent, Sabahans and non-Sabahans, freely released their emotions, devoid of any inhibition, to emphasise their jubilation as though it was an act of divine intervention. The underdog had triumphed. The worst fears were over. Hope had returned.

Spontaneous victory celebrations, parties and long hours of merriment swept thoughout Sabah. Many people wept openly on that fateful Thursday morning not because it was Maundy Thursday, (Christian day of mourning), but those tears were tears of liberation. Liberated from the shackles of tyranny. It was a realisation that the people could practise their religion freely again, that public funds would not be squandered; that the morality of conscience would once again pervade the chambers of government, that justice would prevail.

If those auspicious wee hours were only fleeting moments of blissful happiness and rejuvenated-pride, the next 52 days were memorable. Those 53 days of Berjaya's

government will long be remembered, and preserved for posterity. The glorious days will be engraved in gold as a new chapter in Sabah's history.

It would be a fitting finale in the closing chapters of his biography, to retrace the path of Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin during those 53 momentous days, so that he may be remembered for all that he had stood for, had done or attempted to do, in the brief span of 53 days.

15th April, 1976 (Maundy Thursday)

When the election results were finally declared, Berjaya had won 28 of 48 seats to form the government. As required in a democratic practice, a new Cabinet had to be sworn in. The effervescent Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin took the oath before the *Yang DiPertua Negara* as Minister of Local Government and Housing, much to the delight of his supporters and admirers.

16th April, 1976 (Good Friday)

At 3.00 p.m., Datuk Peter Mojuntin attended Good Friday services at St. Michael's Church, Penampang. Majority of the congregation saw Datuk Peter, a devout Catholic, walking towards the altar and kissing the Cross as it is a practice for Catholics to do so during Good Fridays.

17th April, 1976 (Holy Saturday)

At 8.00 p.m. Datuk Peter Mojuntin was given the honour to lead the Holy Saturday procession during Mass.

18th April, 1976 (Easter)

It was Easter Sunday. Datuk Peter always participated actively during the Easter religious celebrations. He sang the hymns, read the holy scriptures, followed the procession and carried the Cross. This particular Easter Mass was a thanksgiving High Mass for Berjaya's victory at the polls. He remained in church after the Mass to wish everyone a Happy Easter.

Datuk Peter was summoned by the people of Kundasang to verify the allegation of Berjaya's intention to join USNO in a coalition government in Sabah.

Not only was this a rumour but the idea of a possible coalition with USNO was thought in some quarters as an ideal and effective development, especially if Tun Mustapha was no more its leader.

The people of Kundasang also wanted an assurance from Datuk Peter that Berjaya's manifesto would be implemented. He assured them that the people's trust and faith in Berjaya would not be violated.

26th April, 1976 (Official Opening of State Legislatve Assembly)

The Sabah Legislative Assembly met for the first time since the Berjaya Government was formed. Datuk Peter took his Cabinet seat as Minister of Local Government and Housing. The *Yang DiPertua Negara* (Governor), in his address said :

"I give thanks to Almighty God that the democratic processes which led to the change of the State Government of Sabah were orderly and peaceful. I want to place on record my deep appreciation of the exemplary way in which the Election Commission and the Police Force and the security forces performed their respective functions before, during and after the elections. The people of Sabah owe them a debt of gratitude for making it possible for them to exercise their democratic rights."

"I wish to congratulate YAB Tun Datuk Hj. Mohd. Fuad Stephens and all his Cabinet colleagues and Parti Berjaya on winning the elections and on forming the new Government. I have every confidence that the Government under Tun Fuad's leadership will address itself resolutely

to the great and urgent task of translating the aspirations of the *rakyat* into realities."

"To the Honourable members of the Opposition I need hardly say how important it is for the working of our democratic system of government that you remain true and faithful to the *rakyat* and constitution in your role as loyal opposition."

"The General Elections that we have just had was a lesson in democracy which the people will not forget easily. Nevertheless, I want this House to bear constantly in mind that democracy does not end with one party being given the mandate and another the Oppositon. We must see to it that the democratic processes will continue to play a meaningful role in the life of our people. In order to make democracy a way of life for our people the Government will encourage popular participation in organising and managing community affairs through the local bodies, the village development committees, through gotong royong teams, through co-operatives and so on. The Government will aslo look into the possibilities of giving a new lease of life to the institutions of *Ketua Kampong* and Native Chiefs. The democratic processes can be brought to bear on this by getting the people to have more say in the appointment of their own chiefs. This is certainly one good way of exposing the *rakyat* to democracy in between General Elections. The Native Chief's Conference will be revitalised and made meaningful as this is one important avenue through which the *Bumiputras* can air their views and aspirations and put forward their requirements so that action can be taken to meet them."

"In addtion I want all Honourable members to remember what the Chief Minister has said on several occasions about your being the servants of the people.

This Government will do its utmost to discard the old impression that politicians, especially Ministers and Assistant Ministers, are a privileged lot who can do what they like and who do not have to account to any one for their deeds. The Government will do every thing possible to bring about the closest possible rapport with the people. In this way, the people will perhaps no longer regard Ministers with awe and fear but will instead look upon them as their friends. Members of the Government must earn the people's respect. They should never try to demand it."

1st May, 1976 (The Party)

Those who indulge in astrology, the sixth sense or believe in premonitions, would acknowledge as very intriguing the events that occured at the Winner Hotel, Kota Kinabalu on May 1st. 1976. Recollecting the event, one of the guests had this to say : "The Catholic teachers of Penampang had organised a reception in honour of the School Supervisor, Frederick Tan, who was nominated as a member of the State Legislative Assembly. Datuk Peter being the Chairman of the Penampang Parent-Teacher Association, was also invited to the function. The function was held at the Winner Hotel, Kota Kinabalu. Datuk Peter was the last to arrive. As he entered, everyone in the hall stood up. He immediately exclaimed, "Why do you people have to stand up for me ? Please sit down and make yourselves comfortable.'"

One of the teachers standing near him remarked, "We did not stand to honour Peter, the *Kampong* man, but to honour our Minister."

Datuk Peter laughed it away and modestly added, "What is after all a Minister in a small state like Sabah ?"

Though he wanted to leave earlier, to attend another victory party in Kampong Hungab, Datuk Peter stayed on

until 10.15 p.m. He was in very high spirits that night and uttered a lot of jokes, sometimes attracting the attention of customers seated at other tables. It was characteristic of him because he always felt at home in the company of friends.

At this party, Datuk Peter made a short speech, which to some of the guests, recollecting later, appeared to be a premonition. Datuk Peter said : "YB Fred Tan spoke because he is the guest of honour. Datuk Fred Sinidol spoke because he had enjoyed the food. (laughter) and now it is my turn to pay for the good makan for I have also enjoyed the food."

"Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, for talking a bit of politics. Being teachers you talk about education when you speak, businessmen talk about business. As a politician, I cannot avoid talking politics when I speak."

"YB Frederick Tan is nominated as an Assemblyman not because he is your School Supervisor but because of his loyalty to the Berjaya cause. He has proved his loyalty beyond doubt. He has been with us in politics for the past fifteen years. I think I am responsible for drawing him out of school into politics."

"**Moreover, I am growing old and will soon retire from politics.**" At this point, Frederick Tan interuppted and said that he was older that Datuk Peter."

"I did not campaign in Moyog. As you all know, I had to go to other places to campaign. My victory in Moyog was due to YB Fred Tan, and others."

Datuk Peter, who had delivered hundreds of speeches, had never before made such remarks or insinuations in any of them. What a coincidence that his prediction of a probable retirement from politics at the age of thirty seven was transformed into reality exactly thirty seven days later !.

8th May, 1976 (Harvest Festival)

In all communities, there is one significant event which differentiates itself from the rest of other communities. It is an event which has evolved through the centuries, unique and synonymous with its traditions and culture.

To the Kadazan, the 'Harvest Festival' has a special significance because the majority are farmers, with an agrarian background and the festivities are synonymous with their way of life. During such occasions they are able to forget their woes, to feel a sense of security and pride, to be able to identify themselves with others of their community; to demonstrate with a feeling of personal achievement, their artistic creations and to compete in contests of skill and strength.

The Harvest Festival or in Kadazan – *Magavau* – is a celebration to honour *Bambaazon* the spirit of the padi. It is a Kadazan belief that *Kinoingan*, the God of the Kadazan, and his wife, *Suminadu*, had an only daughter who was known as *Huminodun*. In order to create the Kadazan, *Kinoingan* sacrificed his only daughter. He planted various parts of her body, as if she were a cluster of seeds, so that food would be available for his creation – the Kadazan.

Out of the sacred soil and flesh of *Huminodun*, germinated *Bambaazon* , the spirit of the padi. The Kadazan have, since time immemorial, found it befitting to honour this spirit so that bigger and betterharvests would be reaped by them.

Just before harvest time, a village priestess carefully selects seven stalks of padi and ties them together. These are left standing in the field until after the harvest. These stalks symbolise *Bambaazon* . When the harvest is over, the seven stalks of padi are cut by the priestess and taken

into the home of the owner of the padi-field. *Bambaazon* is then considered to be in that house. *Magavau* (Harvest Festival) will take place when the padi has been winnowed and stored in the barn.

The ceremony begins just after sunset. The priestess and her attendants sit on the floor of the living room and start chanting prayers to *Bambaazon*. This goes on for about two hours, whereupon the priestess and the attendants stand up and circle slowly around the room, still chanting. After a while they sing songs in praise of *Bambaazon*. At this stage, the men join in the ceremony, singing along with the priestess and attendants, at the same time stamping their feet on the floor at regular intervals uttering the awe inspiring *Pangkis*, the war or victory cry of the Kadazan. This goes on till dawn when preparations are made to feel *Bambaazon* with the *Habot* (fermented rice) and *tapai* (rice wine)

Bambaazon stays in the house guarding the padi in the barn, until the next planting season when another ceremony is performed to take him to the padi field. This is known as *Monogit*.

No community has the right to subjucate the culture of another community. Neither can any culture claim pre-eminence over other cultures. For a community devoid of a culture loses its identity and any community that attempts to erode the culture of another, in whatever subtle form, is guilty of a heinous crime against civilisation. Cultural hegemony has no place in modern society and should not be condoned.

There is no yardstick to measure culture. It is the embodiment of a people's dream, their aspirations, their history over countless generations and continuous evolutionary processes, providing the generation of the time with

a sense of direction and character. Each culture has its own identification. To suppress or deny the free expression of this cultural identification, is morally wrong and inconsistant with the democratic process.

It was unfortunate that for the last nine years, when Sabah was governed by USNO administrators, attempts were made to diminish the importance of the Harvest Festival. This was blatant persecution. Had it not been for the efforts of Datuk Peter, and the uncompromising attitude of the youths in the Kadazan Cultural Association, the festival may have been lost in oblivion. Throughout those USNO years it was celebrated on an extremely modest scale, much to the chagrin of the Kadazan community.

This situation has been reversed since the defeat of USNO. Datuk Peter was selected to lead a high powered committee to organise the 1976 festival. The objective was to restore the importance of the Harvest Festival in the Sabah calender, an honourable status which it had held until purged by the undemocratic USNO regime.

It was agreed that Penampang, was to be the site for the 1976 festival. It was the first time in nine years that the people of Sabah, primarily the Kadazan, flocked to the District Council Padang in Penampang to partake in the auspicious time honoured celebration. In attendance was Tun Fuad, Datuk Peter as chairman and all his other Cabinet colleagues.

Datuk Peter was exuberant and hilarious on that day. Accompanying Tun Fuad, he visited each of the twelve huts constructed by the kampong people for the festival. He drank *tapai*. the native wine, ate, and danced the native dance, *'Sumazau'*. No one realised it was to be the last of the common feasts he had with his people. Datuk Peter spent the entire day with them, talking, laughing and joining

in their games. He was so overjoyed that he went up on stage to entertain the crowd with Kadazan songs. It certainly was one of the happiest moments of his life.

9th May, 1976 (Harvest Festival)

He attended the Thanksgiving Mass held in conjunction with the Harvest Festival at St. Michael's Church. He read a prayer to commemorate the occasion. He prayed for the prosperity of Sabah, for Malaysia and the Leaders of the country. Those present remarked that it was one of the best prayers recited by a layman in church.

When Mass was over, he followed the *Mamanau Kampong* – a procession held once a year. It was the culmination of the Harvest Festival.

21st May, 1976 (Official Duties)

Datuk Peter Mojuntin visited the State Housing Commission Headquarters in Sembulan. He was briefed by the Chief Executive Officer, Verus Aman Shah, on the various Housing projects for the State under the 2nd. Malaysia Plan.

In his capacity as Minister of Local Government and Housing, he visited the low-cost housing flats in Tanjong Aru.

27th May, 1976 (Meeting the People)

Speaking at a dialogue session at Kampong Bawing Liu, Datuk Peter said that as the elections were over, it was time for the people to co-operate with the government for the next five years instead of quarrelling among themselves.

He called on all supporters of the various parties in the State 'to bury the hatchet' and make way for a fruitful understanding and unity amongst them, irrespective of political ideologies, racial differences or creed.

He warned that both the government and the people would gain nothing if negative attitudes prevailed. He advised government officers to leave politics to the politicians and get on with their normal duties.

Speaking on the responsibilities of an Assemblyman, Datuk Peter said that the *wakil rakyat* (public representative) should give equal consideration to the people in his constituency, irrespective of political differences. It is the Assembleman's duty to bring the *rakyat* request to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

5th June, 1976 (Eve of Tragedy)

Datuk Peter worked zealously after his elevation to the Cabinet, a position long overdue. He approached his job with the dedication of a missionary, never losing sight of his simplicity and charm. Apart from having to perform his Ministerial functions, he found time to entertain the numerous people who came to congratulate him at his office and his home. His evenings were occupied with victory celebrations in various kamongs or in officiating the opening of new branches of Berjaya.

In the office, he attended to correspondence, met visiting dignitaries, spoke to journalists and inspected various projects undertaken by his Ministry.

He was able to move freely with his people because he had a strong command of his native dialect. Furthermore he was a gifted speaker with charismatic appeal.

Among the duties that he had to perform on June 5th. 1976 was the official opening of the Berjaya Branch at Labuan. He had an extremely busy schedule for the following day – 6th. June. One of them was to present a challenge trophy (Datuk Mojuntin Shield) to the successful team in a soccer final at his village in Penampang.

In order to be home in time to keep his appoinments the next day, Datuk Peter bought a return ticket for a scheduled flight leaving Labuan at 1.30 p.m. for the 6th. of June. It was a flight he never took. Why ? This is a puzzle shrouded in mystery.

6th June, 1976 (The Catasrophe)

Datuk Peter had decided to return home at 1.30 p.m. on Sunday, June 6th. 1976. He had already purchased the ticket on a scheduled MAS flight. He had promised the Penampang football officials that he would be there to present the Challenge trophy to the winning team. Why then, did he fail to take the 1.30 p.m. flight ? Furthermore, Datuk Peter would certainly have had the intention of returning home early in order to attend Church services at St. Michael's since it was Pentecost Sunday; special religious services would be held. What caused him to change his plans from taking the scheduled 1.30 p.m. MAS flight from Labuan to Kota Kinabalu ?

It was certainly not due to the lack of room in the *Fokker Friendship* since he already possessed a return ticket. Why was he prepared to waste the return ticket knowing that he had made prior commitments in Kota Kinabalu ?

Was it because of the sudden appearance of Tun Fuad and his party which included Datuk Salleh Sulong, Chong Thian Voon and Darius Binion ? Would Datuk Peter be alive today if the plane with Tun Fuad's party had not arrived or had been delayed and had arrived after 1.30 p.m.? Admittedly, the flight made by Tun Fuad and his party was not planned. It was a spontaneous decision, made after they had participated in the Walkathon competition at Kota Kinabalu early that Sunday morning. Spurred by the morning walk and a spirit of adventure Tun Fuad decided to leave for Labuan to welcome Malaysian Finance Minister,

Tengku Razeliegh and the Sarawak Chief Minister, Datuk Pattingi Hj. Abd. Rahman Yakub, who were visiting the oil refinery at Labuan on their way to Kota Kinabalu, to sign an Oil Agreement between the State Government and Petronas, scheduled for June 7th.

Did Datuk Peter cancel the scheduled flight at 1.30 p.m. that day because he was accompanying the Federal Minister at Labuan ? Tun Fuad and his party left Kota Kinabalu for Labuan at 10.00 a.m. on the Nomad Aricraft. This plane has a seating capacity for 10 passengers.

At 1.30 p.m., Datuk Peter missed his MAS flight to Kota Kinabalu. At that time also Tun Fuad and his party had arrived at Labuan. Did Datuk Peter choose to forfeit his return flight because of the unexpected arrival of Tun Fuad and his party ? There is no satisfactory explanation.

Datuk Peter was an extrovert. For the last 52 days he had been intoxicated with happiness. From all indications he did not want an end of the atmosphere of fun, gaiety and laughter. Unfortunately he only had 52 days. But how was he to know? We are not masters of our Fate.

Probably his fateful stay at Labuan that day was a consequence of the Minister's visit. But the argument is irrelevant because anyone from Tun Fuad's party could have replaced him.

The last known act of Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin was his refusal to accept an invitation to travel in another plane leaving for Kota Kinabalu. The passengers in the other plane included Datuk Harris Salleh and Datuk Pattingi Hj. Abd. Rahman Yakub.

Instead, he boarded the Nomad Aircraft with Tun Fuad and his party. Was he not aware that 11 passengers were in excess of the maximum capacity ? Did the pilot

not inform him ? Was he not aware that the plane was stuffed with duty-free goods from Labuan ? Why did he still choose to ride with Tun Fuad's party which ended in tragedy ?

These are questions which will be left unanswered. Probably for every question, there will appear other more complex questions. It was a tragic end. Datuk Peter made his exit during his finest hour.

At Penampang, residents from all the surrounding *kampongs* converged at the District Council Padang, to witness an important sporting event – the inter-district soccer finals. The event was more auspicious because everyone knew that their patriarch, the Minister of Local Government and Housing, was the patron and would personally present the 'Datuk Peter Mojuntin Shield' to the champions.

It was past the starting time, and Datuk Peter had not arrived. The officials decided to wait for a few more minutes since Datuk Peter was the guest of honour. He still did not arrive. The officials grew restless, the players were getting impatient, the crowd wondered. It was during this period of uncertainty, that one of the officials received a telephone message from a colleague of Datuk Peter, requesting the organisers to proceed with the game and that Datuk Peter would be arriving later.

Datuk Peter never made it to the finals !

7th June, 1976 (The Epitaph)

"Peter is with us no more,
Gone, lost forever from our sight,
To immortal rest and everlasting peace,
To the memory banks and histories."

(The Author)

"Length of days is not what makes age honourable,
Nor number of years the true measure of life . . . .
Coming to perfection in so short a while,
He achieved long life !

(The Bible – 'Book of Wisdom')

Epilogue

It is difficult to sing the praises of a person who has died so young. Sometimes, vanity and pride or egoism, are human weaknesses which may lead us to suppress the achievements of others and often we find ourselves ridiculing even belittling the contributions of a contemporary.

I cannot deny that there are others who have made sacrifices and contributed much towards the restoration of democracy in Sabah. Like Datuk Peter, they too deserve mention but it will happen to them at a different place and time in history and others may sing their praises.

In a similar manner, I do not claim that what is presented in this short biography, is the complete story of Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin. I hope others who may attempt to document the achievements of Datuk Peter, may include those aspects of his life that have been inadvertently omitted here.

However, it is a well known fact and none can deny it, that in the political turmoil in Sabah, when no one dared to protest against USNO, Datuk Peter stood resolutely and steadfast, against the tide of oppression, tyranny and corruption. He did not achieve much but he spoke up without fear. In those utterances, he gave his people hope, strength and the courage to withstand the agonies of oppression.

In the process of compiling this short biography, I often encountered this remark : "Peter had never held a Ministerial position before 1976. This was his first portfolio as a Minister."

This is a fact. Except for a brief spell as Assistant Minister of Industrial Development, he had since 1963, been the Assemblyman for Moyog. The situation would

have been different, if he had chosen to shut his eyes to all the injustices and abuses around him. He was the Secretary General of two political parties (UNKO and UPKO). He would not have been ignored had he collaborated with the unscrupulous politicians in their nefarious activities. He was a political giant who refused to be drawn into the camp of political dwarfs. Nonetheless, he was not lost in the political wilderness. He was at the very core of Sabah politics. None can deny this

He was a man of high principles, deeply seated in his religious beliefs. No position was rewarding if justice, equality and freedom, were denied to his people, his state and his country.

Will Berjaya be the Berjaya of his dreams ?

(i) "To preserve and protect the integrity, independence and the Democratic Status of the Nation.

(ii) To bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities than those existing in the present system.

(iii) To work with other parties in the Federation to establish an economic order which will give all citizens the right to work and obtain full economic returns for their labour and skill.

(iv) To ensure decent living and social security for all."

(Berjaya's Constitution)

TIME IS THE ONLY ARBITER.